University of Alberta

Socrates Must Die: 'the problem of Socrates' in Twilight of the Idols

by

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Every man who wishes to rise superior to the lower animals should strive his hardest to avoid living all his days in silent obscurity, like the beasts of the field, creatures which go with their faces to the ground and are slaves of their bellies. We human beings have mental as well as physical powers; the mind, which we share with the gods, is the ruling element in us, while the chief function of the body, which we have in common with the beasts, is to obey. Surely, therefore, it is our intellectual rather than our physical powers that we should use in pursuit of fame. Since only a short span of life has been vouched safe for us, we must make ourselves remembered as long as may be by those who come after us. Wealth and beauty can give only a fleeting and perishable fame, but intellectual excellence is a glorious and ever lasting possession.[1]

– Sallust

For my grandpa, thank you for being a gentleman

Abstract

This thesis is a partial interpretation of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols*, and is primarily focused upon the 'Preface' and 'The Problem of Socrates.' The interpretation assumes that *Twilight of the Idols* manifests 'logographic necessity.' The thesis concludes that Nietzsche's rhetorical presentation of Socrates as a pessimist and nihilist serves a pedagogical purpose which can only be appreciated in light of the essay as a whole.

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List of Abbreviations for Textual References

BGE – *Beyond Good and Evil*

BT – *The Birth of Tragedy*

  Attempt – 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism'

EH – *Ecce Homo*

  Wise – 'Why I am so Wise'

  Books – 'Why I Write Such Good Books'

HH – *Human All Too Human*

TI – *Twilight of the Idols*

  Preface – 'Preface'

  Maxims – 'Maxims and Arrows'

  Socrates – 'The Problem of Socrates'

  Reason – '"Reason" in Philosophy

  World – 'How the "True World" in the End Became a Fable'

  Morality – 'Morality as Anti-Nature'

  Errors – 'The Four Great Errors'

  Improvers – 'The "Improvers" of Mankind'

  Germans – 'What the Germans Lack'

  Skirmishes – 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man'

  Ancients – 'What I Owe to the Ancients'

  Hammer – 'The Hammer Speaks'

Introduction

The works of Nietzsche's last productive year (1888), – of which *Twilight of the Idols* (*Götzen-Dämmerung*), is one – "are sometimes dismissed as mere products of insanity."[2] However, there are those who obviously do not share this dismissive opinion – it is unlikely that one who did would take the time to translate carefully and comment thoughtfully upon what they considered to be expressions of a madman. This is not to say, however, that these individuals are free from reservations regarding these texts. Notably, Walter Kaufmann, one of the foremost English translators and interpreters of Nietzsche, is of the opinion that these final works "manifest a rapid breakdown of the author's inhibitions,"[3] and that there exist passages in these works that contain flickers of "what might be interpreted as signs of madness."[4] The opinion of another commentator, William H. Schaberg, is less ambivalent. He says in *The Nietzsche Canon*:

> Certainly, it is impossible to maintain that there was no onset of the symptoms of insanity before January of 1889 – any reading of the letters or of some sections of Nietzsche's writings from the last quarter of 1888 clearly delineate a man who has begun to lose his grip on reality. But those same letters – and most especially his writings – also contain some of the sharpest and most incisive analysis and evaluation that Nietzsche ever produced, and it is equally clear that these are not simply the ravings of a madman but the product of a mind ablaze in the fever of self-awareness and insight.[5]

Schaberg's argument, that it is impossible for one to maintain that Nietzsche did not suffer symptoms of insanity before January of 1889, raises the possibility that *all* of Nietzsche's texts are potentially tainted with insanity. This is the case for two related reasons. First, one cannot locate the precise moment of the onset of symptoms from the evidence available. And second, one cannot prove that Nietzsche was not insane at any particular point, as one cannot prove a negative.

To be fair, Schaberg would likely question the first of the two reasons above. For, on the basis of the letters and some sections of Nietzsche's works, Schaberg locates the onset of symptoms in "the last quarter of 1888" – thereby protecting the earlier works from the possible taint of insanity. While this may seem to be an adequate defense of Nietzsche's earlier writings, I find its basic assumption troubling, as it assumes that anyone can identify which parts of the works in question are sane and which are not.

But, if one dismisses Schaberg's argument, does one dismiss the best chance of defending at least part of Nietzsche's corpus from accusations of insanity? Not necessarily. In fact, Nietzsche can defend his entire corpus himself. As the philosopher says in *Beyond Good and Evil*, a work which Schaberg's argument identifies as 'insanity-free': "Our highest insights must – and should – sound like follies and sometimes like crimes when they are heard without permission by those who are not predisposed and predestined for them" (BGE, 30). If one can credit the philosopher with sanity here, then it could be that it is in precisely those passages that seem to "clearly delineate a man who has begun to lose his grip on reality" where we will find "some of the sharpest and most incisive analysis and evaluation that Nietzsche ever produced." Presuming that what is said is coherent, what in terms of the views expressed sounds like madness may simply be an insight we "are not predisposed and predestined for."

In light of the above, the prudent assumption – that is, for an interpreter who presumes that Nietzsche has something to teach – is the very one Schaberg says is certainly impossible to maintain: that there was no onset of the symptoms of insanity before January of 1889.[*] This 'prudent assumption' not only protects Nietzsche's entire corpus from the taint of insanity, but also serves as a stringent standard of textual interpretation – it requires the interpreter to treat every passage as rationally defensible, and so prevents the ready dismissal of a hard truth as merely the product of insanity.

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[*] This is not to say that we are then to concede that Nietzsche's physical breakdown in January of 1889 was clearly accompanied by a psychological breakdown – but neither will we actively contest it. Rather, since a conclusion either way is absolutely irrelevant to the consideration of texts which were written prior to January of 1889, one is better served by remaining an agnostic, as it lessens the possibility that unconscious bias may creep into one's analysis.

This 'prudent assumption' is also a necessary condition for another assumption employed in the following interpretation of *Twilight*. I assume *Twilight* to be "good writing" in the sense that it manifests what Leo Strauss, following Plato, calls "logographic necessity." In *The City and Man*, Strauss says that,

> A writing is good if it complies with 'logographic necessity,' with the necessity which ought to govern the writing of speeches: every part of the written speech must be necessary for the whole; the place where each part occurs is the place where it is necessary that it should occur; in a word, the good writing must resemble the healthy animal which can do its proper work well.[6]

'Logographic necessity' serves as the most stringent standard for textual interpretation: it requires that a fully adequate interpretation can account for the author's rationale and intention in every feature of the text. Clearly, this assumption would be indefensible if one were considering the work of someone who was mentally unbalanced – who, by definition, would be incapable of complete coherence.

In the final analysis, however, the only persuasive argument for the assumption that a text manifests 'logographic necessity' is a coherent interpretation of the whole text – an interpretation I do not pretend to provide in this thesis. Therefore, while my partial interpretation of *Twilight* seeks to comply with this 'most stringent standard,' it will of necessity remain preliminary and provisional in nature. It is my hope, however, that even this partial interpretation may persuade the reader that there is abundant evidence in favor of the view that *Twilight* manifests 'logographic necessity.'

In defense of my assumption, I must first of all preempt a common criticism that others have made by way of arguing for the careless nature of *Twilight* – the title itself:

Twilight of the Idols, Or How One Philosophizes With a Hammer. Without being previously informed of the fact, few readers of *Twilight* would ever suspect that the essay originally bore another title. From the beginning of the 'Preface,' the reader encounters explicit references to the dominant image of both the title (the idols), and the sub-title (the hammer). Nietzsche speaks of "*sounding out idols*," of "new idols," of "idols-of-the-age," of "*eternal* idols," of "puffed-up idols" (TI: Preface).[7] He says he will pose questions in the essay "with a *hammer*," that idols will be "touched with a hammer as with a tuning fork" (TI: Preface). The philosopher even uses the title twice in the essay proper (TI: Morality, 3; Germans, 3). Finally, in the concluding section, he even has "the hammer speak" (TI: Hammer). Further, the reader familiar with other works of the philosophic tradition may recognize the implicit (and apparently quite purposeful) similarity of Nietzsche's "Four Great Errors" to the four "Idols of the Mind" that Francis Bacon presents in *The New Organon*.[8] Given such *prima facie* evidence in favor of *Twilight* as a title for this work, the reader may wonder why its suitability is even in question.

The reason is three-fold. The first reason is related to the knowledge of the title change itself. If one assumes the philosopher only revises his work for some reason, with some purpose in mind, then simply knowing about the title change demands that it be explained, as it may provide an insight into the text as a whole. The second reason is related to the source of the knowledge. Since this knowledge is a result of scholars' access to private sources (i.e., Nietzsche's workbooks and much of his private correspondence), the explanation of the title change appears to be an opportunity to examine the psychology of the philosopher. The final reason is related to the particular character of the knowledge in question. The original tile, *Idleness of a Psychologist* (*Müssiggang eines Psychologen*), also seems to be thematically consistent with, and thus is considered suitable for, the essay. It is the suitability of this original title that has led some to speculate about the reason behind, and even the appropriateness of, the title change.

English readers of *Twilight* are apt to be informed of the title change by an 'Introduction' to the English translation they happen to be reading. The discussions of this change in such introductions are generally contextualized by excerpts from Nietzsche's private correspondence. In particular, the discussions speculate upon the role of one letter from 'Peter Gast' (Nietzsche's nickname for Heinrich Köselitz) that begs of the philosopher a "more resplendent title" for the essay he must have read in manuscript or proof. The letter (20 September 1888) reads as follows:

> The title [*Müssiggang eines Psychologen*], sounds too unassuming to me when I think how it might impress other people: you have driven your artillery on the highest mountains, you have such guns as have never yet existed, and you need only shoot blindly to inspire terror all around. The stride of a giant, which makes the mountains shake to their foundations, is no longer idleness. … So I beg of you, if an incompetent person may beg: a more sumptuous, more resplendent title![9]

The authors of the introductions to three of the English translations of *Twilight* (R. J. Hollingdale,[10] Tracy Strong,[11] and Walter Kaufmann[12]), do not agree on the significance of this letter from Gast. One the one hand, both Hollingdale and Strong suggest reasonably that the letter provided the impetus for the title change. As Hollingdale states it, the original "modest title was objected to by Nietzsche's enthusiastic admirer Peter Gast, who urged him to find something more 'splendid'; Nietzsche acceded to this request with a parody of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* (*Twilight of the Gods*)."[13] Strong similarly contends, "Upon prompting from Köselitz – who found [the original title] inadequately thunderous – Nietzsche tried out a number of variations and came up with 'Twilight of the Idols'."[14]

Walter Kaufmann, on the other hand, suggests that the letter is more significant, as is evident in his comments that accompany his reproduction of the letter: "Such adulatory flattery was surely what Nietzsche needed least just then"[15] – elliptically referring (one presumes) to Nietzsche's future physical and mental collapse. The difference between the three scholar-translators can be summarized thus: while the statements of Hollingdale and Strong are compatible with the title change having been made out of philosophic considerations prompted by Gast's suggestion, Kaufmann's statement is not, at least not entirely. Rather, on his account, the title change is the result of the philosopher un-philosophically succumbing to "adulatory flattery." If Kaufmann is correct, then the philosophic suitability of *Twilight* as a title can be doubted – and so, then, one can reasonably doubt that the essay itself manifests 'logographic necessity.'

Another commentator on the re-titling of *Twilight*, David S. Thatcher, concurs with Kaufmann's psychological explanation. In his article 'A Diagnosis of Idols,' Thatcher states that Nietzsche was "Always susceptible to flattery, however obsequious, and always ready to oblige his friends and disciples when they proffered suggestions, however unsolicited."[16] Thatcher's characterization of Gast's suggestion as "unsolicited" is puzzling in light of a preceding statement he had made: "On September 20 Gast wrote to Nietzsche acknowledging receipt of the galley proofs"[17] of *Twilight*. Whether a philosopher or not, the provision a draft copy of a text to another individual entails the implicit, if not the explicit, solicitation of suggestions regarding the improvement of the text. Further, one cannot infer from the simple fact that Nietzsche acted upon the solicited suggestion that he was motivated by the "adulatory flattery" contained therein, rather than by reflection on the merits of Gast's suggestion – at least not without providing further evidence in support of the inference.[18]

Rather, if one is to speculate about the philosopher's motivation, one should take one's lead from the philosopher himself. Elsewhere, Nietzsche states that he has "several guinea pigs who illustrate for [him] different reactions to [his] writings – different in a very instructive manner" (EH: Books, 3). And when one considers that Nietzsche declares that "From this moment forward all my writings are fish hooks" (EH: Books: BGE, 1) – i.e. that his post-Zarathustra works are designed to attract and 'hook' suitable readers – it seems much more plausible that he made the title change with this goal in mind. In fact, that Nietzsche made the title change with an eye to angling for readers after his "posthumous birth," and that he simply used Gast to 'sound out' the title, appears to be the most plausible interpretation of the available evidence. This conclusion is strengthened by Nietzsche's characterization of *Twilight*, in a letter to Paul Deussen (14 September 1888), as "a very stringent and subtle expression of my whole *philosophical heterodoxy* – hidden behind much gracefulness and mischief." In light of the assault on the 'false religions' and 'false idols' of our time which is contained within, 'heterodoxical' is the precise character of *Twilight*. Thus, not only is *Twilight* a "fish hook" to attract "those related to" Nietzsche, but it is also a "No-saying, No-*doing* part" of Nietzsche's task (EH: Books: BGE, 1).[19]

In light of the considerations above, Nietzsche's choice of title cannot, simply on the basis of his correspondence with Gast, be interpreted as motivated by an un-philosophic submission to "adulatory flattery." Nor, therefore, can Nietzsche's final choice of title serve as evidence for the careless or otherwise ill-considered character of the essay. That said, it remains the task of a fuller interpretation to provide the only convincing argument for the assumption of the essay's meeting the standard of 'logographic necessity.'

Now, briefly to outline the structure of what follows. The next section will examine Nietzsche's 'first-born,' *The Birth of Tragedy*, in which he provides his first analysis of 'the problem of Socrates.' This preliminary examination will sketch Nietzsche's accounts of both the Apollinian-Dionysian synthesis which (Nietzsche argues) resulted in the birth of Attic tragedy, and the Socratic tendency which resulted in the death of tragedy and the birth of optimistic philosophy, personified in the fascinating example of the theoretical man. Familiarity with these accounts prepares one for a deeper understanding of 'the problem of Socrates' as presented in *Twilight*, the attainment of which is the primary concern of the present thesis. This main section begins with an examination of the 'Preface' that will both partially reveal the relationship which exists between *Twilight* and *The Birth of Tragedy*, and provide a provisional account of the overall intention of *Twilight*. This is followed by an extensive examination of Part Two of *Twilight* entitled 'The Problem of Socrates.' Based on that examination, the conclusion will explain Nietzsche's rhetorical presentation of 'the problem of Socrates' in *Twilight* – why, that is, he begins this essay with such a 'misleading' portrait of the famous founder of political philosophy.

The Birth of Tragedy

The Birth of Tragedy has three major parts. The main topic of the book, at least on the surface, is a controversial account of ancient Greek culture. This account is located in the first two parts, while the third part is concerned with the re-birth of tragedy in the art form of opera generally, and of Wagnerian opera in particular. The first part, comprising sections 1-10, provides Nietzsche's account of the birth of Attic tragedy. Nietzsche locates this birth in the coupling of the two tremendous, and opposed, "creative tendencies" of the Greek world: the "Apollinian" and the "Dionysian" (BT, 1). The second part, comprising sections 11-15, provides Nietzsche's account of the death of Attic tragedy. Nietzsche locates this death in the development of a "new opposition: the Dionysian and the Socratic" (BT, 12). This discussion of the death of tragedy is at the same time an account of the birth of 'optimistic' philosophy, as exemplified by Socrates, the "most questionable phenomenon of antiquity" (BT, 13). This discussion is actually that which lies at the very heart of *The Birth of Tragedy*.

In revisiting *The Birth of Tragedy*, we follow Nietzsche's own example. In the 1886 preface 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism,' Nietzsche acknowledges that his first born suffers from stylistic deficiencies, which are said to be the result of the book's task being "so uncongenial to youth" (BT: Attempt, 2). Nietzsche's youth resulted in the book's being "Constructed from a lot of immature, overgreen personal experiences, all of them close to the limits of communication" (ibid), at a time when he "still lacked the courage (or immodesty?) to permit [himself] in every way an individual language of [his] own for such individual views and hazards" (BT: Attempt, 6). Reviewing the book sixteen years later with "a much older, a hundred times more demanding, but by no means colder eye" (BT: Attempt, 2), the philosopher professes:

> today I find it an impossible book: I consider it badly written, ponderous, embarrassing, image-mad and image-confused, sentimental, in places saccharine to the point of effeminacy, uneven in tempo, without the will to logical cleanliness, very convinced and therefore disdainful of proof, a book for initiates, 'music' for those dedicated to music, those who are closely related to begin with on the basis of common and rare aesthetic experiences, 'music' meant as a sign of recognition for close relatives *in artibus* – an arrogant and rhapsodic book that sought to exclude right from the beginning the *profanum vulgus* of 'the educated' even more than 'the mass' or 'folk' (BT: Attempt, 3).

What is notable here is that Nietzsche neither criticizes nor qualifies his analysis of ancient Greek culture as presented in *The Birth of Tragedy*. In particular, he never criticizes or qualifies his analysis of 'the problem of Socrates.' In light of this, it will prove useful briefly to sketch the analysis of *The Birth of Tragedy*, and especially that of 'the problem of Socrates,' as a preliminary to examining Nietzsche's treatment of the same problem in *Twilight of the Idols*.

The Apollinian, the Dionysian, and Attic Tragedy

In section 1 of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche discusses "the *Apollinian* and the *Dionysian* duality" that is connected to the continuous development of art. The terms 'Apollinian' and 'Dionysian' – derived from Apollo and Dionysus (both ancient Greek deities of art) – identify two tendencies, opposed in both origin and aims, and embodied in "the Apollinian art of sculpture, and the nonimagistic, Dionysian art of music." In order to understand these two tendencies, it is suggested that we "conceive of them as the separate art worlds of *dreams* and *intoxication*, [...] physiological phenomena [that] present a contrast analogous to that existing between the Apollinian and the Dionysian."

Nietzsche's discussion of dreams begins with their significance. "The beautiful illusion of the dream worlds, in the creation of which every man is truly an artist, is the prerequisite of all plastic art, and, as we shall see, of an important part of poetry also." The worlds which men create in their dreams possess an 'universal intelligibility' in which they take delight. Further, no matter how intensely realistic such 'dream worlds' happen to be, they will "still have, glimmering through it, the sensation that it is *mere appearance*" – a sensation Nietzsche likens to the 'presentiment' of philosophers "that the reality in which we live and have our being is also mere appearance."

According to Nietzsche, the Greeks personified the dream experience in Apollo, whose image not only conveys "measured restraint" and "freedom from the wilder emotion," but also "calm." Further, his image is said to represent "that delicate boundary which the dream image must not overstep lest it have a pathological effect (in which case mere appearance would deceive us as if it were crude reality)." Nietzsche defines this boundary, using a quote from Schopenhauer, as "the *principium individuationis* [principle of individuation]." In fact, the relationship between Apollo and this *principium* is said to be such that in Apollo "the unshakeable faith in this *principium* and the calm repose of the man wrapped up in it receive their most sublime expression."

Nietzsche then turns to the Dionysian, the nature of which can be found in "the blissful ecstasy that wells from the innermost depths of man, indeed of nature, at [the] collapse of the *principium individuationis*." Nietzsche cites two sources of Dionysian emotions: "the influence of the narcotic draught" (intoxication) and "the potent coming of spring that penetrates all nature with joy." As Dionysian emotions grow in intensity the *principium individuationis* collapses, i.e., "everything subjective vanishes into complete self-forgetfulness." Thus, Nietzsche argues that under the influence of intense Dionysian emotions, man feels at one, not only with other men, but with nature as well. These feelings of 'oneness' are often expressed musically. "In song and in dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher community [...] he feels himself a god, he himself now walks about enchanted, in ecstasy, like the gods he saw walking in his dreams. He is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art."

Having introduced the Apollinian and the Dionysian "as artistic energies which burst forth from nature herself, *without the mediation of the human artist*," Nietzsche turns to examining "the *Greeks* in order to learn how highly these *art impulses of nature* were developed in them." This discussion, which begins in section 2, ends in section 4, where Nietzsche says that he has "simply enlarged upon the observation made at the beginning of this essay: that the Dionysian and the Apollinian, in new births ever following and mutually augmenting one another, controlled the Hellenic genius." On the basis of this enlarged discussion, Nietzsche concludes that the history of the older Hellenes "falls into four great periods of art," each dominated by one of the two art impulses. It is in light of this conclusion that Nietzsche analyses "the sublime and celebrated art of *Attic tragedy* and the dramatic dithyramb [which] presents itself as the common goal of both these tendencies whose mysterious union, after many and long precursory struggles, found glorious consummation in this child."

Nietzsche begins section 5 by alerting his reader that "We now approach the real goal of our investigation, which is directed toward knowledge of the Dionysian-Apollinian genius and its art product." However, it is not until section 7 that we actually confront the *problem* "of *the origin of Greek tragedy*." Here Nietzsche cites the one sure historical datum that any valid account of 'the birth of tragedy' must accommodate: the "tradition tells us quite unequivocally *that tragedy arose from the tragic chorus*, and was originally chorus and nothing but chorus." Nietzsche then briefly examines and rejects three different interpretations of the role of the tragic chorus, before providing his own.

The first interpretation holds that the chorus "represents the people in contrast to the aristocratic region of the scene." Nietzsche quickly reveals this interpretation to be mistaken, on the grounds that "the whole politico-social sphere [...] was excluded from the purely religious origins of tragedy." The second interpretation of the tragic chorus, that of A. W. Schlegel, is that it serves as "the ideal spectator." Nietzsche (quite amusingly) shows this interpretation to be impossible, since in its original form there was no spectacle to observe, only chorus: "What kind of artistic genre could possibly be extracted from the concept of the spectator, and find its true form in the 'spectator as such'? The spectator without the spectacle is an absurd notion." The third interpretation, that of Schiller, is characterized as "An infinitely more valuable insight into the significance of the chorus." Stated briefly, it is "the chorus as a living wall that tragedy constructs around itself in order to close itself off from the world of reality and to preserve its ideal domain and its poetical freedom."

Building upon the interpretation of Schiller, Nietzsche introduces "the Greek satyr chorus [as] the chorus of primitive tragedy," arguing that "For this chorus the Greek built up the scaffolding of a fictitious *natural state* and on it placed fictitious *natural beings*." In Nietzsche's account, "the satyr, the fictitious natural being, bears the same relation to the man of culture that Dionysian music bears to civilization." Here, following Richard Wagner, Nietzsche contends that civilization "is nullified by music just as lamplight is nullified by the light of day." Thus, "the Greek man of culture felt himself nullified in the presence of the satyric chorus."

In section 8, Nietzsche returns to Schiller's interpretation:

> Schiller is right about these origins of tragic art [...] the [satyr] chorus is a living wall against the assaults of reality because it [...] represents existence more truthfully, really and completely than the man of culture does who considers himself as the only reality.

Nietzsche, with this much established, takes up the relationship between the chorus and the public. "There was at bottom no opposition between public and chorus: everything is merely a great sublime chorus of dancing and singing satyrs or of those who permit themselves to be represented by such satyrs." This leads him to a deeper understanding of Schlegel's formulation: "The chorus is the 'ideal spectator' insofar as it is the only beholder, the beholder of the visionary world of the scene." The member of this Dionysian chorus "sees himself as a satyr, *and as a satyr, in turn, he sees the god*, which means that in his metamorphosis he beholds another vision outside himself, as the Apollinian complement to his own state."

Nietzsche then draws the conclusion of this insight: "we must understand Greek tragedy as the Dionysian chorus which ever anew discharges itself in an Apollinian world of images." On the basis of this analysis, "the scene [i.e., the characters and actions of the story...] was basically and originally thought of merely as a *vision*; the chorus is the only 'reality' and generates the vision, speaking of it with the entire symbolism of dance, tone, and words." The satyr chorus beheld "its lord and master Dionysus," who was "the real stage hero and center of the vision," though he was "not actually present at first ... [but] merely imagined as present." So, in its beginning form, Attic tragedy was only 'chorus' and not yet 'drama.' For this transformation requires adding the Apollinian depiction of what the satyr chorus is imagining. The satyr chorus excites "the mood of the listeners to such a Dionysian degree that, when the tragic hero appeared on the stage, they did not see the awkward masked human being but rather a visionary figure, born as it were from their own rapture." Dionysian intoxication resulted in an Apollinian waking dream; 'chorus' is transformed into 'drama.'

Socrates in *The Birth of Tragedy*

Not until the twelfth section of the book is Socrates introduced into Nietzsche's analysis of what turns out to be the death of tragedy. Socrates is characterized as both demonic and the opponent of Dionysus. It is with a "*Socratic* tendency" that Euripides is said to have "combated and vanquished Aeschylean tragedy." Euripides, not really understanding the Dionysian-Apollinian synthesis, sought to "base drama exclusively on the un-Dionysian." This left only one form of drama: the Apollinian dramatized epos, in which "the tragic effect is certainly unattainable." This is because, in its idealized form, the dramatized epos "transforms the most terrible things by the joy in mere appearance and in redemption through mere appearance." But, the Euripidean play no longer possessed this Apollinian, "epic absorption in mere appearance." Rather, it required "new stimulants," such as "cool, paradoxical thoughts" and "*fiery* affects." Thus, Euripides did not actually "succeed in basing the drama exclusively on the Apollinian, and his un-Dionysian tendency actually went astray and became naturalistic and inartistic."

Nietzsche has here foreshadowed the conclusion of the final section of his discussion of Socrates. "The hunger for insatiable and optimistic knowledge" (BT, 15), finds expression on various levels. "On its lower levels [it] can express itself in hostility to art and must particularly detest Dionysian-tragic art;" this is a kind of cultural vulgarity (ibid). However, the "*Socratic* tendency" which guides Euripides is a lower expression than that which "in Socrates appears exemplary" (ibid). This difference can also be seen if one compares the ultimate law of "*aesthetic Socratism*" ("To be beautiful everything must be intelligible") with Euripides' "aesthetic principle" ("to be beautiful everything must be conscious"). 'Conscious' and 'intelligible' are not strictly equivalent: what is in principle 'intelligible' may extend well beyond what anyone is 'conscious' of, or 'unconscious' of for that matter. In any case, Nietzsche asserts "That Socrates was closely related to the tendency of Euripides" (BT, 13). Closely related to, not identical with.

It is in this thirteenth and central section that Nietzsche begins his discussion of the higher and more comprehensive Socratic tendency, and thus of Socrates proper. His discussion begins as does that of Diogenes Laertius,[20] with the mention of a "story current in Athens that Socrates used to help Euripides write his plays." Nietzsche then turns to the accusations made against Socrates contained within the comedies of Aristophanes. In that context, Nietzsche points to a significant historical feature of modern times: "modern men […] cannot give sufficient expression to their astonishment that in Aristophanes Socrates should appear as the first and supreme *Sophist*." Modern men simply identify the historical Socrates with the Platonic Socrates, a "Socrates become beautiful (*kalos*) and youthful,"[21] having forgotten the problem of the historic Socrates altogether. This is because they ignore the less flattering testimony of others who also wrote about Socrates, most notably Aristophanes; but even Xenophon's Socrates is not such a refined figure. Nietzsche does not seek to defend "the profound instinct of Aristophanes;" rather he seeks to provide a more accurate picture of Socrates for modern men by showing, through "means of the sentiments of the time, the close connection between Socrates and Euripides."

Nietzsche locates the heart of the Socratic tendency in the phrase "Only by instinct," a phrase said to condemn "existing art as well as existing ethics." The Socratic tendency sees everywhere only a "lack of insight and the power of illusion." Nietzsche claims that Socrates inferred from this "the essential perversity and reprehensibility of what exists," and thus believed "it to be his duty to correct existence: all alone." That Socrates dared single-handedly "to negate the Greek genius," is what "strikes us as so tremendously problematic whenever we consider" him. Nietzsche then offers 'a key' to Socrates' character: "the *daimonion* of Socrates" – which Nietzsche contends is actually itself a form of "abnormal […] instinctive wisdom" that occasionally hinders conscious knowledge. In Socrates, "through superfetation, the logical nature is developed as excessively as instinctive wisdom is in the mystic," which resulted in its manifesting the natural power that is typically found "only in the very greatest instinctive forces." Nietzsche claims that the experience of "the divine naïveté and sureness of the Socratic way of life" is evident in Plato's portrayal, which also allows one to experience the "driving-wheel of logical Socratism […] in motion." It is Socrates' own awareness that he did not actually control this force that led him to insist on "his divine calling." That Athens could neither "refute him here [nor] approve of his instinct-disintegrating influence," led to the conflict between Socrates and Athens, and eventually to Socrates' execution. It was Socrates' logical nature that led him to become a problem for Athens, but it was also what led him to become "the new ideal […] of Greek youths: above all, the typical Hellenic youth, Plato."

Nietzsche then turns, in section 14, to examine Socrates' perspective on tragedy. We are told that Socrates had two reasons for eschewing it: "tragic art did not even 'tell the truth' … [and] it addressed itself to 'those who are not very bright,' not to the philosopher." It was because tragedy portrayed what was agreeable, not what was useful, that Socrates required his disciples to abstain "from such unphilosophical attractions." The most notable result of this was that "the youthful tragic poet Plato first burnt his poems that he might become a student of Socrates."[22] But the artistic propensities of Plato were unconquerable; they "struggled against the Socratic maxims." It was this struggle which eventually led Plato "to force poetry itself into new and hitherto unknown channels." It was artistic necessity which constrained Plato and thereby caused him to create a new art form, the Platonic dialogue, which proved to be "the barge on which the shipwrecked ancient poetry saved herself and all her children."

Nietzsche argues that the forcing of poetry into a new position of ancillary to philosophy was necessary. Even with Sophocles "the Dionysian basis of tragedy [was] beginning to break down." But, though there was

> an anti-Dionysian tendency operating even prior to Socrates, which merely received in him an unprecedentedly magnificent expression, we must not draw back before the question of what such a phenomenon as that of Socrates indicates; for in view of the Platonic dialogues we are certainly not entitled to regard it as a merely disintegrating, negative force.

That is, one cannot assess Socrates simply from the perspective of old Athens. One must investigate the relationship between Socrates (what he represents) and art as such.

Nietzsche tells the reader that what compels this inquiry into the possibility of an 'artistic Socrates' is "a profound experience in Socrates' own life." The profound experience Nietzsche speaks of is portrayed in Plato's *Phaedo*.[23] While in prison, Socrates relates to his friends that "there often came to him one and the same dream apparition, which always said the same thing to him: 'Socrates, practice music.'" Previously certain that "philosophizing is the highest of the muses," Socrates did not attend to other common, popular forms of music, until his final days in prison. Nietzsche tells us that "It was something akin to the demonic warning voice that urged him to these practices," an "Apollonian insight."[24] According to Nietzsche, that dream was "the only sign of any misgivings about the limits of logic" on the part of Socrates, and on that basis he introduces some "suggestive questions."

The final question Nietzsche poses is: "Perhaps art is even a necessary correlative of, and supplement for science?" It is this question that resides in the background of the following discussion, when in section 15, Nietzsche turns to "the influence of Socrates, down to the present moment and even into all future time," providing a subtle reminder of why Socrates' example is a problem for modern times – modern men refuse to give him up (cf. BT, 13). But Nietzsche goes even further with this formulation of the problem: all future men will also refuse to give him up. In light of this realization, Nietzsche's project of providing an accurate picture of Socrates is even more important. Nietzsche must reform the picture of Socrates so that Socrates can serve as a suitable example, not only for modern men, but for all future men.

Nietzsche turns to the Greeks; he speaks of them as they did of Socrates: with "envy, calumny and rancor." But, Nietzsche reveals the hard truth that their leadership position with respect to culture cannot be denied to them: they "hold in their hands the reins of our own and every other culture." To see that Socrates rightly holds such a position as well, one need only "recognize in him a type of existence unheard of before him: the type of the *theoretical man*."

Nietzsche, apparently speaking as one who knows, assures us, "The theoretical man finds an infinite delight in whatever exists, and this satisfaction protects him against the practical ethics of pessimism." But perhaps somewhat more surprising, Nietzsche contends that the theoretical man cares "more for the search after truth than for truth itself." In this connection, it is interesting to note that Plato's Socrates never speaks of a *love of truth*, (*philalêthia*); the closest he comes is *cherishing the truth*, (*aletheian stergein*).[25] In addition to this insight, which is said to have been

> born of an excess of honesty if not of exuberance, there is to be sure, a profound *illusion* that first saw the light of the world in the person of Socrates: the unshakeable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of *correcting* it. This sublime metaphysical illusion accompanies science as an instinct and leads science again and again to its limits at which it must turn into *art – which is really the aim of this mechanism.*

This impulse, first dominant with Socrates, continuously stimulates "the regeneration of *art* – of art in the metaphysical and profoundest sense – and [...] in its own infinity also guarantees the infinity of art."

We must now reexamine Socrates. Once we see

> how after Socrates [...] one philosophic school succeeds after another, [...] how the hunger for knowledge reached a never-suspected universality, [...] how this universality spread a common net of thought over the globe, [... not to mention] the amazingly high pyramid of knowledge in our own time – we cannot fail to see in Socrates the one turning point and vortex of so-called world history.

Nietzsche tells us that Socrates transferred an "incalculable sum of energy" from the practical to the service of knowledge and thereby saved life from a "practical pessimism."

In contrast to this practical pessimism is theoretical optimism – an optimism of which Socrates is the prototype, and of which Nietzsche claims experience.

> Anyone who has ever experienced the pleasure of Socratic insight and felt how, spreading in ever-wider circles, it seeks to embrace the whole world of appearances, will never again find any stimulus toward existence more violent than the craving to complete this conquest and to weave the net impenetrably tight. To one who feels that way, the Platonic Socrates will appear as the teacher of an altogether new form of 'Greek cheerfulness' and blissful affirmation of existence that seeks to discharge itself in actions – most often in maieutic and educational influences on noble youths, with a view to eventually producing a genius.

Having addressed the problem of Socrates – of both the strange nature of the man and his historical impact – Nietzsche turns his eyes toward the future, asking whether the limits of science, towards which science is driven by "the hunger for insatiable and optimistic knowledge that […] has turned into tragic resignation and destitute need for art," will "lead to ever-new configurations of genius and especially of the *Socrates who practices music?*" The deadly truths[*] which science has revealed have undermined the cheerfulness of the theoretical man, the contemporary descendant of the Platonic Socrates. This has resulted in a situation as dangerous to life as the practical pessimism that it supplanted before. Therefore, because all future men will not give up Socrates, and yet the Platonic Socrates cannot serve as a model for our cheerfulness, Nietzsche must reform him. Nietzsche must de-idealize the Platonic Socrates revealing the true example of Socrates which, presumably, can serve as an example for all future time. It is this de-idealization that will be explored in 'The Problem of Socrates' in *Twilight*.

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, 'The Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,' 9. "If by contrast the doctrine of the sovereign becoming, of the fluidity of all ideas, types, and styles, of the lack of all cardinal differences between man and animal (doctrines which I consider true but deadly) are foisted on people for another generation with the frenzied instruction which is now customary, then it should take no one by surprise if people destroy themselves in egotistical trifles and misery, ossifying themselves in their self-absorption, initially falling apart and ceasing to be a people."

Twilight of the Idols

'Preface'

In reading *Twilight of the Idols*, we take up the 'Preface' with only the title in mind. *Twilight of the Idols* (*Götzen-Dämmerung*) invokes Richard Wagner's conclusion to his four-part operatic tragedy *The Ring of Nibelung: Twilight of the Gods* (*Götterdämmerung*).[26] Nietzsche's titular play on terms establishes an expectation of tragedy; we prepare for a tragic essay. Our expectations seem to be confirmed immediately. The philosopher says: "Maintaining cheerfulness in the midst of a gloomy affair, fraught with immeasurable responsibility, is no small artifice; and yet what is needed more than cheerfulness?" Speaking of cheerfulness calls to mind the Greek cheerfulness of *The Birth of Tragedy*. The cheerfulness possessed by the ancient Greeks, despite their knowing and feeling "the terror and horror of existence" (BT, 3), was maintained by a great 'artifice' – by the depictions of the gods and heroes contained in Attic tragedy. But, with the death of tragedy, Greek cheerfulness came to be replaced by a pseudo-cheerfulness: "the cheerfulness of the slave who has nothing of consequence to be responsible for, nothing great to strive for, and who does not value anything in the past or future higher than the present" (BT, 11). This slavish cheerfulness potentially leads to a

> practical pessimism that might even [… generate] a gruesome ethic of genocide motivated by pity, and which incidentally is, and was, present in the world wherever art did not appear in some form – especially as religion and science – as a remedy and preventative for this breath of pestilence (BT, 15).

We can recognize our current danger in the potential for such practical pessimism. At this moment we are closer to the Greeks than ever before. The possibility of philosophy is again in doubt. Our age doubts the power of Reason to provide the answers to the most important questions. The remedy of the ancient Greeks, the successful remedy of two millennia, the cheerfulness of the theoretical man, has begun to fail. The heretofore unfaltering faith in the profound illusion has faltered; "the unshakeable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable of not only of knowing being but even of *correcting* it" (ibid), has been shaken. All around there are what appear to be "universal wars of annihilation and continual migrations of peoples" (ibid). Our age has "generated a gruesome ethic of genocide motivated by pity" (ibid) – euthanasia[27] – not to speak of genocide proper. We have removed Man from the center of all things. The artifice that once maintained and promoted our cheerfulness, science, is now undermining it by steadily revealing ever-more-deadly truths.

"And yet what is needed more than cheerfulness?" Nietzsche asks. We ought to pause and consider the question. Many, including ourselves, may answer 'courage.' Nietzsche does not answer thus; Nietzsche is not one of us – though this is not to say that he depreciates courage: far from it (as his subsequent references to war attest). Nietzsche answers: "nothing succeeds if exuberance plays no part in it." The philosopher has again called *The Birth of Tragedy* to our minds. It was exuberance that was responsible for the insight that the theoretical man "cared more for the search after truth than for truth itself" (BT, 15). But, we ask of the philosopher, what insight will be born of our exuberance?

He answers: "Excess of strength alone is the proof of strength." Strength is required to be cheerful; it is required to live with the Silenic wisdom of our age. Strength is needed to live "an exuberant, triumphant life in which all things, whether good or evil, are deified" (BT, 3); it is needed to come to see the higher comedy that exists in Nature.

"There are heights of the soul from which even tragedy ceases to look tragic" (BGE, 30). The strong can transcend the tragic and see in "the foreground law of thousand-fold failure and ruin" (BGE, 62), the healthy, life-enhancing, background consequences of this law. The strong can come to see the higher value of what the levelers wish to abolish forever and thus set the lowest value upon: suffering (BGE, 44). It is only the strong who can

> think that hardness, forcefulness, slavery, danger in the alley and the heart, life in hiding, stoicism, the art of experiment and devilry of every kind, that everything evil, terrible, tyrannical in man, everything in him that is kin to beasts of prey and serpents, serves the enhancement of the species 'man' as much as its opposite does (BGE, 44).

To think thus, to

> regard even the affects of hatred, envy, covetousness, and the lust to rule as conditions of life, as factors which, fundamentally and essentially, must be present in the general economy of life (and must, therefore, be further enhanced if life is to be further enhanced) – [will cause one to] suffer from such a view of things as from seasickness (BGE, 23).

Only the strong can overcome this nausea and not only live with, but embrace this revaluation. Embracing this revaluation, seeing the good in the evil, is a requirement of seeing our world, as revealed by modern science, as the best possible world. We must, if not reach the higher perspective of comedy, at least overcome the tragic perspective. If we cannot laugh, at least we should not cry.

The next sentence is a break; fittingly it is begun with a dash. Nietzsche no longer speaks of the revaluation of valuations of evil, but the revaluation of all values. He no longer speaks of what we can achieve for ourselves, but what must be achieved for mankind. Nietzsche's shift to a more personal idiom indicates that he now speaks of one like himself. He no longer speaks of simply the strong, but of the strongest of the strong –

the philosopher. Nietzsche speaks of the task that only the philosopher has the capacity to achieve "– A *revaluation of all values*, this question mark, so black, so tremendous that it casts shadows upon the man who puts it down – such a destiny of a task compels one to run into the sun every moment to shake off a heavy, all-too-heavy seriousness."

Nietzsche draws upon the imagery of the philosophic tradition's most famous allegory – Plato's allegory of the cave – to communicate the tremendousness and seriousness of his task. The revaluation of all values, a task one must not only be strong enough to undertake, but also be destined for.[28] To *revalue* all values, notice, not necessarily to destroy all previous values. The task is not simple, mindless destruction, but complex, purposeful re-creation. The goal is not nihilism, but new values (which may include old values renewed).

The philosopher who is destined to descend back down into the dusky cave to undertake "such a destiny of a task" creates the shadows not only for the inhabitants of the cave, but also for himself as a fellow inhabitant. This can be seen as a type of provisional morality akin to that which Descartes lays out in *Discourse on Method.*[29] Yet, as creator, the philosopher knows this provisional morality to comprise imperfect, although life-enhancing, answers to the gravest questions – he knows it is founded on opinion and not knowledge. As such, the philosopher can never be satisfied with it. At "every moment" he will be compelled to leave the cave, "to run into the sun [...] to shake off a heavy, all-too-heavy seriousness," to seek convalescence and healing for his "eyes [that have become] infected with darkness."[30]

Nietzsche's next sentence perplexes us: "Every means is proper for this; every 'case,'[31] a case-of-luck." We come to a halt before it and ask: every means is proper for what? for the task of revaluing all values? or for seeking convalescence in the sun? Nietzsche does not provide us with an explicit answer. Rather, he turns to one particular kind of means: "Especially, *war*." This statement implicitly prejudices us toward the view that the means are proper for a revaluation of all values, for such revaluations can be accompanied by civil turmoil, if not civil war. And, we must remember that there can be "war without powder and smoke" (EH: Books: HH, 1), war on a higher, more spiritual or intellectual (*geistiger*) level.

"War has always been the great wisdom of all spirits who have become too inward, too profound; even in a wound there is power to heal." With this sentence Nietzsche reveals that our initial reaction may be wrong: war, discharging one's energy in open battle, may be a means of convalescence, of relief from "all-too-heavy seriousness." War is not said to be simply a means for the philosopher, such as himself,* but rather for "all spirits who have become too inward, too profound." Nietzsche is giving advice to these spirits.

War is a realm of action, war requires that one act, and as such that one cease to think. One must draw a conclusion and, for better or worse, act upon it. That one drew the wrong conclusion, that one failed, that one was wounded, still serves the purpose – the action was taken, thinking ceased. Either one succeeded and can move on to other thoughts secure in one's belief, or one failed and can begin rethinking anew. Either way, one has been released from one's inwardness and oppressive profundity – in a sense, one's spirit-intellect (*geist*) has been healed. Upon consideration, the philosopher's advice is directed toward helping us overcome the tragic perspective – we must come to see the beneficial side of harm. (We may still have doubts: is it really the case that just as there is no harm-free alternative in political life, there is no benefit-free alternative either? Is there really a silver lining to every dark cloud however black?)

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* Cf. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 'Why I am so Wise,' 7. "War is another matter. I am warlike by nature. Attacking is one of my instincts. To be *able* to be an enemy, to be an enemy – this, perhaps, presupposes a strong nature; in any case it belongs to every strong nature. It needs objects of resistance, hence it *looks for* what resists: the *aggressive* pathos belongs just as necessarily to strength as feelings of revenge and rancor belong to weakness."

The following sentence initially appears to be simply a continuation of Nietzsche's discussion of the spiritual-intellectual healing power of wounds, but upon reflection it proves to be a concise statement of Nietzsche's stance toward poetic license – which is important given what Nietzsche later seeks to achieve in 'The Problem of Socrates' and *Twilight* as a whole.

"A maxim, the origin of which I withhold from scholarly curiosity, has long been my motto: *increscunt animi, virescit volnere virtus* [Spirits (Souls) increase, virtue grows through a wound]."[32] Nietzsche has explicitly drawn our attention to his withholding of the origin of his motto – he would not have done so without a reason. He knows that if he had remained silent about his silence, few people, perhaps even few scholars, would be curious enough to search out the origins on their own. Nietzsche knows that by emphasizing what he has withheld from scholarly curiosity, he will intensify that very curiosity (and perhaps even in the non-scholarly reader). It can only be concluded that Nietzsche intends for us to seek out the origins of his motto – the motto must have more significance than it first appears.

The quote '*increscunt animi, virescit volnere virtus*' is the central sentence (counted by periods) of a poem which is found in Book XVIII Chapter XI of *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*, where Aulus Gellius discusses "Words from the poems of Furius of Antium which were ignorantly criticized by Caesellius Vindex."[33] In the chapter in question, Aulus Gellius sides with the poet Furius against the grammarian Caesellius, defending the poetic license the poet displayed in creating new words and meanings. The six lines of the poem are as follows:

> Blood floods the world, the deep earth turns to mud (*lutescit*).
> All becomes night (*noctescunt*) with darkness of black gloom.
> [Spirits (Souls) increase, virtue grows (*virescit*) through a wound.]
> The fleet lightly skims the deep like a seabird,
> The East Wind's breath empurples (*purpurat*) the green surge.
> That on their native plains they may grow rich (*opulescre*).[34]

The imagery of the poem is unmistakably consistent with that which Nietzsche has employed thus far. Yet it goes further, providing imagery which we have had to provide for ourselves, imagery consistent with the life-enhancing consequences of that which is considered to be evil – 'blood floods the world from the wounds of war, war raises the virtues of many who will grow rich on their native plains.' We are thereby reminded that it is not all who benefit from war. Many must be vanquished so that others can be victors. If we wish to be among those who benefit, then we must enter like those who are going to take possession. But simply calling such imagery to our minds is not why Nietzsche chose to withhold the origin of his motto, the imagery of the motto's poetic context was already present in Nietzsche's discussion. That the remainder of the poem is also consistent is of little consequence. Rather, as we shall see, Nietzsche has another purpose for withholding the origin.

Of the five words which Caesellius 'ignorantly criticized,' provided above in their Latin original, two of them occur only once in any form in any still existing Latin text (*noctescunt* and *opulescre*).[35] That Nietzsche's motto is a line from this poem indicates that Nietzsche, like Gellius, is siding with the poet against the grammarian on the issue of poetic innovation, not only in images, but in language itself. Furius not only created new words but gave new meanings to them as well (*virescit* and *purpurat*).[36] In a like manner, the philosopher who revalues all values both creates new values and gives new meaning to them (e.g., good and evil, moral and immoral). Nietzsche's sanction of poetic innovation in the creation and revaluing of the meaning of words provides further license to his own philosophic creation and revaluation, not only in the understanding of the relationship of war, wounds and convalescence, but also, as remains to be seen, in both language and the reader's understanding of Socrates. Nietzsche is proclaiming that he no longer lacks "the courage (or immodesty?) to permit [himself] in every way an individual language of [his] own for such individual views and hazards" (BT: Attempt, 6). The analysis in *Twilight* will not suffer from the defects, noted earlier,[37] of *The Birth of Tragedy*.

But this will not be evident to the one reading *Twilight* for the first time – it is most unlikely that he will have sought out the origin of Nietzsche's motto upon first coming to it, or could have found it had he tried. Therefore, it is likely that he intends for us to consider his motto, as is fitting, in the context of the text as a whole. In light of this, it is safe to consider Nietzsche's motto as a continuation of his discussion of the spiritual-intellectual healing power of wounds. Thus, we are unsurprised when he turns to "Another mode of convalescence."

"Another mode of convalescence, under certain circumstances even more to my liking, is *sounding out idols* …" The pregnant ellipsis begs us to pause, to consider what Nietzsche means by "*sounding out idols*." 'Idols' brings to mind the second of the ten commandments of the Biblical God – that which forbids the making of graven images.[38] It raises the specter of false gods. Yet Nietzsche goes even further, he raises the heretical idea of sounding them out, of listening to what they have to say. Nietzsche's questioning goes beyond the political and moral order, it embraces the religious as well. Nietzsche is not only a teacher of evil from the perspective of established political and moral authority, but a heretic from the perspective of established religious authority – the Biblical God is a jealous God.[39]

Nietzsche's next sentence more explicitly draws out the heretical implications of what he has just said. He again provides an ellipsis, again begging us to pause and consider what is said. "There are more idols than realities in the world: that is *my* 'evil eye' for this world, that is also my 'evil ear' …" Nietzsche presents a new teaching about the 'evil eye' to replace the Biblical. No longer is the 'evil eye' envy – as a condition of life envy must be enhanced (BGE, 23) – rather it is the knowledge of the quantity and pervasiveness of idols. Nietzsche also expands the meaning of 'idols.' The philosopher does not mean simply 'false gods' as we have initially assumed. The meaning of 'idols' is connected to 'realities.' For instance, there are 'realities' that are themselves 'idols,' e.g., the various religious and philosophic interpretations of existence that are revered and respected. But, 'idols' are not simply interpretations of existence, they are also the causes of our misinterpretation of existence. The plurality of 'idols' is due to the nature of our minds and individual histories, while the plurality of 'realities' is due to these 'idols.'

We are being introduced to Nietzsche's subjectivism – that each individual has a unique perspective rooted in their individual experiences that colors and masks reality.[40] Later, when Nietzsche discusses "*the error of imaginary causes*" (TI: Errors, 4), he calls the readers attention to the problem of the instinctive recollection of past experiences contained in memory, which produces "a habitual *acceptance* of a particular causal interpretation, which, as a matter of fact, inhibits any *investigation* into the real cause and even precludes it" (TI: Errors, 4). Such subjective bias is often taken to preclude the possibility of an objective perspective. But, Nietzsche's next sentence tells us that there is a process whereby to attain just that perspective. It also reveals that he himself delights in that very process. Unlike those whose instincts result in the character of existence being masked (cf. TI: Errors, 4-5), Nietzsche's instincts encourage him to investigate the character of existence. Just like Socrates, then, Nietzsche's instincts are abnormal.*

> For once to pose questions here with a *hammer* and, perhaps, to hear as a reply that famous hollow sound which speaks of bloated entrails – what a delight for one who has ears even behind his ears, – for me an old psychologist and pied piper before whom just that which would remain silent *must become outspoken* ...

The means to the attainment of an objective perspective is to pose questions "with a hammer as with a tuning fork," to sound out the idols and to see to what extent they ring true (i.e., to see to what extent they are still life-enhancing), while sounding a true note.[41] The hammer in question is not that of the demolisher, but that of the diagnostician. With it Nietzsche will occasionally discover an idol whose reply is "that famous hollow sound which speaks of bloated entrails," a sound which is a symptom of decay. It is the discovery of just such decaying idols that Nietzsche finds delightful – it is just these views of existence that the philosopher will seek to destroy. As psychologist, Nietzsche follows "the path to the fundamental problems" (BGE, 23), and is thereby capable of discovering the symptoms of decaying idols that result in the decline of life. As pied piper,[42] Nietzsche leads these decaying idols to speak "that which would remain silent," and thereby both dispels their power and reveals their feet of clay – all idols are (by definition) flawed.[*] Nietzsche has revealed to the reader that he is not simply an 'idoloclast.' Rather, he only seeks to overthrow those idols that no longer serve their purpose, those idols that are no longer life-enhancing, those idols that have decayed and no longer help to maintain cheerfulness.

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* Cf. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 13. "We are offered a key to the character of Socrates by the wonderful phenomenon known as the '*daimoniom* of Socrates.' In exceptional circumstances, when his tremendous intellect wavered, he found secure support in the utterances of a divine voice that spoke up at such moments. This voice, whenever it comes, always *dissuades*. In this utterly abnormal nature, instinctive wisdom appears only in order to *hinder* conscious knowledge occasionally. While in all productive men it is instinct that is the creative-affirmative force, and consciousness acts critically and dissuasively, in Socrates it is instinct that becomes the critic, and consciousness that becomes the creator – truly a monstrosity *per defectum!*"

That the sounding out of idols is a mode of convalescence for the philosopher is fortunate, as it is a necessary component to any successful revaluation of all values. The successful revaluer of values must determine which of the preexisting values (the preexisting idols) are no longer life-enhancing and must therefore be overthrown and replaced, and which simply need to be revalued, either raised or lowered. To be able to seek recovery from the creative aspect of one's 'destiny of a task' in the destructive aspect of that very task is truly a case of luck. Upon making this realization, a realization we are invited to make by the ellipsis at the end of this central paragraph of the 'Preface,' we must ask: what part of the project is *Twilight*?

This is the precise question which Nietzsche goes on to answer. "This essay too – the title betrays it – is above all a recreation, a spot of sunshine, a leap sideways into the idleness of a psychologist."[43] And before we can formulate the questions ourselves, Nietzsche places them before us: "Perhaps a new war, too? And are new idols sounded out?..." By doing so, Nietzsche has covered over an important question, a question provoked by the remark which Nietzsche inserted with dashes: how does the title of *Twilight of the Idols* "betray" the essay?

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 'Preface,' 2. "No new idols are erected by me; let the old ones learn what feet of clay mean. *Overthrowing idols* (my word for 'ideals') – that comes closer to being part of my craft."

Other commentators have seen this aside as simply a reference to the superceded title, *Idleness of a Psychologist (Müssiggang eines Psychologen)*, which is explicitly mentioned immediately after the aside.[44] But, it should be clear from what has come before that I do not share their opinion. In fact, even if we had simply skimmed past all that has come before, Nietzsche's claim is still intelligible in light of what he answers to the questions that he himself just raised:

> This little essay is a *great declaration of war*; and regarding the sounding out of idols, this time they are not just idols-of-the-age, but *eternal* idols, which are here touched with a hammer as with a tuning fork, – there are altogether no older, no more convinced, no more puffed-up idols ... and none more hollow ... That does not prevent them from being those in which people have *the most faith*; nor does one ever say idol, especially not in the most distinguished instance ...

The idols sounded out in the following pages will not necessarily be overthrown; Nietzsche will have sounded them out, not to all, but only to the readers of this essay. While the bell may have been tolled, the sun has not yet set – the *Twilight of the Idols* is upon them. Nietzsche leaves it for us to smash their feet of clay.

The reader of *Twilight* will soon discover that the essay that follows this 'Preface' is a *tour de force*. Nietzsche has set before himself the task of questioning and diagnosing "not just idols-of-the-age, but *eternal* idols" – a task which carries him through eleven separate sections, dealing with every important aspect of political and moral and religious and philosophic life. In Nietzsche's own words, *Twilight* "is a very stringent and subtle expression of my whole *philosophical heterodoxy* – hidden behind much gracefulness and mischief" (Paul Deussen, 14 September 1888). In turning to 'the Problem of Socrates' we now turn to the heart of *Twilight*, for just as the Platonic Socrates provided the artifice to maintain cheerfulness to the Greeks, so Nietzsche, through de-idealizing Socrates, will seek to do so for us.

'The Problem of Socrates'

The title of this section has a double meaning which is pertinent to the following discussion. The first meaning, which is more readily grasped, particularly by those familiar with Nietzsche's apparent animosity toward Socrates, is that Socrates is himself a problem. The second meaning, easily overlooked initially, but which becomes apparent as one progresses through the section, is that Socrates has a problem.

The first meaning of the title has much in common with Nietzsche's discussion of the problem of Socrates in *The Birth of Tragedy*. As elaborated in our previous discussion of *The Birth of Tragedy*, it was there that Nietzsche first explored the problem that the example of the Platonic Socrates poses for modern men, indeed, for all future men. The solution Nietzsche provided to this problem in *The Birth of Tragedy* was a return from the Platonic Socrates to the historical Socrates, through the aid of the less flattering Socratic accounts provided by Aristophanes and Xenophon (and even that of Diogenes Laertius). Here in *Twilight*, Nietzsche seeks to effect this return by de-idealizing the Platonic Socrates, and thereby unmasking Socrates' example.[*] This unmasking, in turn allows Nietzsche to re-evaluate the historical Socrates with the intention of revealing a 'noble and new' Nietzschean Socrates, which can presumably serve as an exemplar.[†] The success of this re-evaluation requires that Nietzsche has solved the problem of correctly understanding both the historical Socrates and his significance, a problem whose solution requires that Nietzsche has correctly identified "the main features" which are essential to the example of the historical Socrates, as it is these "main features" which must be brought out so that what is "petty and inconsequential" will "disappear in the process" (TI: Skirmishes, 8). We should also note that this problematic and questionable character of Socrates, which epitomizes the problematic and questionable character of philosophy, is emphasized in this section by Nietzsche's use of 26 question marks.

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 190. "In a jest, Homeric at that: what is the Platonic Socrates after all if not *prosthe Platon opithen te Platon messe te Chimaira* [Plato in front and Plato behind, in the middle Chimera]."

[†] Cf. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 34. "*Historia abscondita* [hidden history]. – Every great human being exerts a retroactive force: for his sake all of history is put on the scale again, and a thousand secrets of the past crawl out of their hiding places – into *his* sunshine. There is no telling what may yet become a part of history. Maybe the past is still essentially undiscovered! So many retroactive forces are still needed!"

The second meaning of the title is itself two-fold. The first sense is also related to *The Birth of Tragedy*, but less explicitly. During Nietzsche's discussion of the problem of Socrates in *The Birth of Tragedy*, it gradually becomes apparent that the forcing of poetry into a new position of ancillary to philosophy was made necessary by the fact that the "the Dionysian basis of tragedy [was] beginning to break down" (BT, 14). Essentially, the foundation of "Greek Cheerfulness" was eroding and a new one *had* to be laid.[45] But, as a result of that earliest book being "very convinced and therefore disdainful of proof" (BT: Attempt, 3), Nietzsche never fully illuminated the character of the ancient Greek situation which led to the events described therein. It is here, in *Twilight of the Idols* that Nietzsche sheds light upon this source of the problem which Socrates had to face. The origin of the second problem which Socrates faced, however, is Socrates himself – as we will later discover, it is a problem inherent to both his character and his way of life, and as such it is essentially related to the first meaning of 'the problem of Socrates.'

'The Problem of Socrates,' 1 – 2

In the first aphorism, Nietzsche's discussion of 'the problem of Socrates' begins with a judgment of "the wisest men of all ages." It is said that "concerning life" they all "judged alike: *it is worthless*…" Note the emphasis Nietzsche places upon the Silenic character of this "consensus sapientium;" these "wisest men of all ages" sound like the companions of Dionysus: as if it is better to have never been born.[*] With his pregnant ellipsis, Nietzsche invites us to ask whether his own judgment agrees with theirs. Provisionally, we might say that it does. After all, Nietzsche is a wise man, even one who wrote about 'Why I am so Wise' (EH: Wise). He is also a disciple of Dionysus.[†]

But, will we not also ask how Nietzsche came to see this consensus? It is to this that he turns next. "Always and everywhere one has heard the same sound from their mouths – a sound full of doubt, full of melancholy, full of weariness of life, full of resistance to life." What is the "sound from their mouths" to which Nietzsche is referring? Few men of any age are fortunate enough to hear a truly wise man speak, let alone one of "the wisest men of all ages" – Nietzsche himself never met Schopenhauer; rather, he relied upon his writings.[‡] Is Nietzsche then speaking of their writings, as he does of Schopenhauer's? We suspect so, at least for the most part – though there are reports of them from their contemporaries and descendants.

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 3. "There is an ancient story that King Midas hunted in the forest a long time for the wise Silenus, the companion of Dionysus, without capturing him. When Silenus at last fell into his hands, the king asked what was the best and most desirable of all things for man. Fixed and immovable, the demigod said not a word, till at last, urged by the king, he gave a shrill laugh and broke out into these words: 'Oh, wretched ephemeral race, children of chance and misery, why do you compel me to tell you what it would be most expedient for you not to hear? What is best of all is utterly beyond your reach: not to be born, not to *be* , to be *nothing*. But the second best for you is – to die soon.'"

[†] Cf. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 'Attempt at Self Criticism,' 4. "Indeed, what is Dionysian? – This book contains an answer: one 'who knows' is talking, the initiate and disciple of his god"; *Twilight of the Idols*, 'What I Owe to the Ancients,' 5. "I, the last disciple of the philosopher Dionysus"; and *Ecce Homo*, 'Preface,' 2. "I am a disciple of the philosopher Dionysus; I should prefer to be even a satyr to being a saint." But, there is the question of how a 'disciple' is related to a 'companion.'

[‡] Cf. Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, 'Schopenhauer as Educator,' 2. "And whoever has felt what it means to discover among our tragelaphine men of today a whole, complete, self-moving, unconstrained and unhampered natural being will understand my joy and amazement when I discovered Schopenhauer: I sensed that in him I had discovered that educator and philosopher I had sought for so long. But I had discovered him only in the form of a book, and that was a great deficiency. So I strove all the harder to see through the book and to imagine the living man whose great testament I had to read and who promised to make his heirs only those who would and could be more than merely his readers: namely his sons and pupils."

Based on our suspicion, it is very curious that the "sound" is "the same sound." Very few individuals would suggest that the sages all said the same thing. In fact, it is now common 'knowledge' that they all refute each other. But upon reflection, we recognize that Nietzsche is not describing the content of the "sound," but the character of the "sound," the tone. Nietzsche characterizes the "sound" heard "always and everywhere" as "full" of four things: "doubt," "melancholy," "weariness of life," and "resistance to life." We must ask, given our provisional response above, is this the character of what Nietzsche says? Again, common 'knowledge' is that Nietzsche is a nihilist.[46] But, is Silenic wisdom necessarily nihilistic?

Regardless, we will not readily accept Nietzsche's sweeping generalization concerning "the wisest men of all the ages." For we can point to at least one of these sages as a counter-instance of this generalization. We can even quote the philosopher's own words back to him:

> Anyone who has ever experienced the pleasure of Socratic insight and felt how, spreading in ever-wider circles, it seeks to embrace the whole world of appearances, will never again find any stimulus toward existence more violent than the craving to complete this conquest and to weave the net impenetrably tight. To one who feels that way, the Platonic Socrates will appear as the teacher of an altogether new form of 'Greek cheerfulness' and blissful affirmation of existence that seeks to discharge itself in actions – most often in maieutic and educational influences on noble youths, with a view to eventually producing a genius (BT, 15).

These words, discussed in our earlier chapter on *The Birth of Tragedy*, would seem to suggest that the Platonic Socrates is the counter-instance rendering Nietzsche's generalization doubtful.[47] If these words accurately characterize the Platonic Socrates at all, it is in contradistinction to the four-fold character of the tone of the "sound" Nietzsche here attributes to the sages – that of a melancholy rejection of life.

But our ready appeal to the Platonic Socrates (as previously noted), is part of the problematic character of Socrates, a problem Nietzsche was the first to recognize – or so he claims. As such, Nietzsche, knowing we would make this appeal, as we will not give up the glorified example of Socrates, has attempted to pre-empt our doing so: "Even Socrates said, as he died: 'To live – that means to be diseased a long time: I owe Asclepius the Savior a rooster.'" Nietzsche seemingly invokes the last words of the Platonic Socrates, as depicted in *Phaedo*, in justification for his generalization. "Even Socrates was tired of it." Nietzsche repeats himself, stressing Socrates as the ultimate validation of what he has said, the perfect ratification of his generalization about all wise men everywhere at all times.

While knowledgeable students of Plato's dialogues would compare Nietzsche's account with that of Plato without prompting, less knowledgeable readers may not, especially given that Nietzsche has not explicitly identified the origin of the words he 'quotes.' In an effort to prompt the reader seriously to consider the significance of Socrates final words, Nietzsche poses a question not once, but twice: "– What does that *evidence*? What does it *evince*? –" Nietzsche offsets these two questions, with their emphasized terms, by dashes, perhaps signaling to the reader that he must break from the text in order to consider them properly.

Taking Nietzsche's questions seriously, we review Plato's account of Socrates' final words:

> And the parts about his lower belly had already nearly grown cold when he uncovered himself (for he had covered himself) and said what was to be the final thing he uttered: 'Crito,' he said, 'we owe a cock to Asclepius. So pay the debt and don't be careless.'[48]

It is immediately evident that Nietzsche has changed the Platonic account: Socrates, as related by Phaedo (in Plato's depiction), never said: "To live – that means to be diseased a long time," nor did he characterize Asclepius as a "Savior." Nietzsche has himself placed these words in the mouth of Plato's Socrates (the only source we have for Socrates' final words). In light of this, the reader, doubting that words which do not actually belong to the Platonic Socrates can serve as evidence of the character of the historical Socrates, may be tempted simply to discount them. But, we should not be too quick in succumbing to this temptation. The words that Nietzsche attributes to the Platonic Socrates can serve as evidence of the character of Socrates, if they are *implied* by the actual words of the Platonic account.

Thus, we are naturally led to ask the following question: are the words, as expressed by Nietzsche, a valid interpretation of the Platonic account? For, this is in fact what these attributed words are, as may be recognized by a reader familiar with Nietzsche's other texts. We find Nietzsche providing them *as an interpretation* in his earlier account of "The Dying Socrates," in *The Gay Science* (#340):

> Whether it was death or the poison or piety or malice – something loosened his tongue at that moment and he said: 'Oh Crito, I owe Asclepius a rooster.' This ridiculous and terrible 'last word' means for those who have ears: 'Oh Crito, *life is a disease*.'

In surreptitiously substituting this interpreted paraphrase of Socrates' "last word," Nietzsche fits it to what he has said; thus Socrates' example is advanced as clinching evidence in favor of Nietzsche's generalization regarding all wise men everywhere at all times.*

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* The entire aphorism from *The Gay Science* runs as follows: "*The dying Socrates*. – I admire the courage and wisdom of Socrates in everything he did, said – and did not say. This mocking and enamored monster and pied piper of Athens, who made the most overweening youths tremble and sob, was not only

Obviously, for this to be at all acceptable, one must determine whether or not Nietzsche's interpretation of the Platonic Socrates' last words is the correct one. But, making this determination would require a complete interpretation of Plato's *Phaedo* – something I do not pretend to be able to provide here. Suffice it to say, plausible alternative interpretations of Socrates' last words can be suggested. For instance, rather than expressing Socrates' own "ultimate judgment, his inmost feeling," Socrates' final words can be interpreted as designed to help others, and in particular those present at his death, who have trouble 'learning how to die.' On the basis of this interpretation, Socrates' final words would *not* "lack an ounce of magnanimity" – quite the contrary – but rather, would be a manifestation of precisely such magnanimity.* But, while we ought to remain suspicious of Nietzsche's interpretation, in the absence of an alternative comprehensive interpretation of *Phaedo* we can provisionally proceed upon the basis of the interpretation which Nietzsche presents – and thus, can provisionally conclude in favor of his generalization concerning the judgment of the sages.

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the wisest chatterer of all time: he was equally great in silence. I wish he had remained taciturn also at the last moment of his life, – in that case he might belong to a still higher order of spirits. Whether it was death or the poison or piety or malice – something loosened his tongue at that moment and he said: 'Oh Crito, I owe Asclepius a rooster.' This ridiculous and terrible 'last word' means for those who have ears: 'Oh Crito, *life is a disease*.' Is it possible! A man like him, who had lived cheerfully and like a soldier in the sight of everyone, – should have been a pessimist! He had merely kept a cheerful mien while concealing all his life long his ultimate judgment, his inmost feeling! Socrates, Socrates *suffered life*! And then he still revenged himself – with this veiled, gruesome, pious, and blasphemous saying! Did a Socrates need such revenge? Did his overrich virtue lack an ounce of magnanimity? – Alas, my friends, we must overcome even the Greeks!" It is also interesting to note, that while Nietzsche speaks both of his wish that Socrates had been able to bite his tongue, i.e. that he had not spoken the "last word" that he did, and of his reason for this wish, i.e. the terrible meaning of this "last word," Nietzsche himself explicitly reveals the meaning to all those who do not have the "ears" to hear it on their own. While criticizing the looseness of Socrates' tongue, Nietzsche reveals his own tongue to be even looser.

* Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,' 46. "It may be loftiness of the soul when a philosopher is silent, it may be love when he contradicts himself; and he who has knowledge may be polite enough to lie." That is, life could be the greatest good there is, and yet Socrates could denigrate it in order to help his friends accept, not only his death, but their own as well.

Returning to 'The Problem of Socrates,' we see that Nietzsche continues his discussion upon the basis of our concluding in favor of his generalization. So, he now turns to the issue of how one is to explain this melancholic "consensus sapientium."

> Formerly one would have said (– oh, it has been said, and loud enough, and especially by our pessimists!): 'At least something of all this must be true! The consensus sapientium evidences the truth.' – Shall we still talk like that today? *May* we?

Nietzsche provides us with the explanation of others in the past. Formerly, those who have recognized the existence of the "consensus sapientium" have deferred to the judgment the sages chose to express in their words (and presumably in their books). Their consensus was taken as evidence of the truth of what they said – especially by "our pessimists," since the "consensus sapientium" accorded with their own judgment concerning the value of life.[49]

"Shall we still talk like that today? *May* we?" – Nietzsche poses one question in two different ways: how now are "we" to explain the existence of the consensus of the sages? Note, Nietzsche's questions appear to be shared, one initially presumes with those "today" who recognize this consensus – who admittedly would be few, since common 'knowledge,' as mentioned previously, is that the sages all refute each other. Nietzsche first asks whether they "shall" speak as "one would have" formerly, before questioning whether they "*may*" still do so. The emphasized verb of this second question is perhaps an indication that it takes priority over the first. The answer to the second question determines whether or not the first question is even asked – if they "may" not "talk like that today," then they necessarily "shall" not; but, if they "may," they must then decide whether or not they "shall."

Nietzsche now provides an alternative explanation of the consensus of the sages. Note that, like the questions above, this explanation also appears to be shared – it is "*we*" that is emphasized. But given the irreverent character of Nietzsche's explanation, one suspects that the philosopher only says "'we' for politeness' sake" (TI: Reason, 5).[*]

> 'At least something must be *diseased* here,' *we* retort: these wisest men of all ages, they should first be scrutinized closely! Were they all perhaps shaky on their legs? late? tottery? décadents? Could it be that wisdom appears on earth as a raven, inspired by a little whiff of carrion?

Nietzsche's alternative explanation implicitly answers the shared questions that Nietzsche posed previously: those included in Nietzsche's "we," either "may" not, or "shall" not, explain the consensus of the sages as "one would have" formerly. In either instance, a question is raised: why not? Since at this moment we cannot possibly answer that question, we should simply note that those included in Nietzsche's "we" will proceed in a novel manner; they will not accept the judgment of "the wisest men of all ages" as evidence of *its truth*.[†] Rather, Nietzsche explains the "consensus sapientium" as the result of "something" which is "*diseased*," a "something" which will be found by scrutinizing closely "these wisest men of all ages." Thus, Nietzsche asks – seemingly rhetorically –

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'The Problem of Socrates,' 2. "This irreverent thought that the great sages are *types of decline* first occurred to me precisely in a case where it is most strongly opposed by both scholarly and unscholarly prejudice: I recognized Socrates and Plato to be symptoms of decay, tools of the Greek dissolution, pseudo-Greek, anti-Greek ('Birth of Tragedy' 1872)." In light of the beginning of this next aphorism, the suspicion that Nietzsche is being polite (perhaps even magnanimous, it seems possible that he is dissembling his wisdom by seemingly including others) appears to be justified. Another possibility is that those included in this "we" are those "related to" Nietzsche (cf. *Ecce Homo*, 'Why I Write Such Good Books,' Beyond Good and Evil, 1), or are the "philosophers of the future" of which he sometimes speaks (cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 42).

[†] Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,' 42. "*Where faith is needed.* – Nothing is rarer among moralists and saints than honesty; perhaps they say the contrary, perhaps they even *believe* it. For when a faith is more useful, more effective, and more persuasive than *conscious* hypocrisy, then hypocrisy soon turns instinctively into *innocence*: first principle for the understanding of great saints. The philosophers are merely another kind of saint, and their whole craft is such that they admit only certain truths: namely those for the sake of which their craft is accorded *public* sanction – in Kantian terms, truths of *practical* reason. They know what they *must* prove; in this they are practical. They recognize each other by their agreement about 'the truths.' – 'Thou shalt not lie' – in other words, *beware*, my dear philosopher, of telling the truth ..."

whether the sages were "all perhaps shaky on their legs? late? tottery? décadents?" But we had best keep open the possibility that these questions may *not* be simply rhetorical, but genuine.

Finally, we should note that it seems only fitting that Nietzsche – who is the first philosopher to speak "with reverence and gratitude" of the "delicate instrument" of the nose (TI: Reason, 3) – would raise the question of whether "wisdom" could be "inspired" by the smell of something decaying.[*] This question reminds us of our own experience of how we tend to become curious when we smell something which is unusual. But, we must ask, what is it that Nietzsche suggests is decaying? Is it perhaps society? In posing the questions that he does, it is possible that Nietzsche may be hinting that philosophy itself is in some way intrinsically connected to, perhaps merely as a sign of, décadence.

The second aphorism begins with Nietzsche recalling the origin of his thought that philosophers, or "the wisest men of all ages," or "the great sages," are intrinsically linked to decline, to decay, to décadence.

> This irreverent thought that the great sages are *types of decline* first occurred to me precisely in a case where it is most strongly opposed by both scholarly and unscholarly prejudice: I recognized Socrates and Plato to be symptoms of decay, tools of the Greek dissolution, pseudo-Greek, anti-Greek ('Birth of Tragedy' 1872).[†]

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Reason in Philosophy,' 3. "– And what magnificent instruments of observation we possess in our senses! This nose, for example, of which no philosopher has yet spoken with reverence and gratitude, is actually the most delicate instrument so far at our disposal: it is able to detect minimal differences of motion which even a spectroscope cannot detect."; see also *Ecce Homo*, 'Why I am so Wise,' 8. "May I still venture to sketch one final trait of my nature that causes me no little difficulties in my contacts with other men? My instinct for cleanliness is characterized by a perfect uncanny sensitivity so that the proximity or – what am I saying? – the inmost parts, the 'entrails' of every soul are physiologically perceived by me – *smelled*."

[†] Cf. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 'Why I Write Such Good Books,' The Birth of Tragedy, 1. "Secondly, there is the understanding of Socratism: Socrates is recognized for the first time as an instrument of Greek disintegration, as a typical decadent."

Nietzsche characterizes his thought as "irreverent" because it is opposed to the reverent view most people possess of the philosophers in general, and of Socrates and Plato in particular. Nietzsche identifies this reverent view of the philosophers as a "prejudice" of the "scholarly and unscholarly" alike – note, it is not necessarily a "prejudice of philosophers" (cf. BGE, part 1). The "prejudice" is the belief that "the great sages" are of the highest types, that they are types of ascent, not decline. It is the belief that they epitomize the 'heights' of which mankind is capable, that they are the mountain peaks of the range of humanity. It is the identification of the philosopher as a sign of the greatness of an age.

This is not the first time that Nietzsche has had to confront this "prejudice." He has already directed his reader to where he first sought to deal with it: his analysis of the problem of Socrates in *The Birth of Tragedy*.[50] But, the reader who is familiar with this analysis will recall that it was not wholly negative. In particular, it is in this analysis that Nietzsche says: "in view of the Platonic dialogues we are certainly not entitled to regard [the phenomenon of Socrates] as a merely disintegrating, negative force" (BT, 14). In fact, the manner in which Nietzsche here expresses his "irreverent thought" is not completely "irreverent." Nietzsche does not identify "the great sages" in general, and Socrates and Plato in particular, as *causes* of decay; and whether or not they are themselves décadents is a question Nietzsche merely raises. Rather, they are identified as at least symptoms of decay, of the dissolution of Hellenic culture.[*] Thus, we come to see the significance of the philosophers' appearing when they do: their appearance is a sign that the culture in which they arise is in decline. Perhaps, then, Nietzsche is similarly a symptom of the decline and décadence of our culture?

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 427. "The appearance of the Greek philosophers from Socrates onwards is a symptom of décadence; the anti-Hellenic instincts come to the top. The 'Sophist' is still completely Hellenic – including Anaxagoras, Democritus, the great Ionians – but as a transitional form. The *polis* loses its faith in the uniqueness of its culture, in its right to rule over every other *polis* – One exchanges cultures, i.e., 'the gods' – one thereby loses faith in the sole prerogative of the *deus autochthonus*. Good and evil of differing origin are mingled: the boundary between good and evil is blurred – This is the 'Sophist' – The 'philosopher,' on the other hand, is the *reaction*: he desires the *old* virtue. He

Nietzsche now returns to his alternative explanation of the consensus of the sages.

> The consensus sapientium – I comprehended this ever more clearly – proves least of all that they were right in what they agreed on: it proves rather that they themselves, these wisest men, agreed in some *physiological* respect, and hence adopted the same negative attitude to life – *had* to adopt it.

Nietzsche concludes that the expressed agreement of the sages is proof of some sort of "*physiological*" agreement. The sages "*had* to adopt" this "same negative attitude to life" as a necessary result of their sharing the same physiology. As curious as we may at first find this to be – that a psychological disposition is the necessary result of a physiological condition – this causal relationship can be seen clearly if we simply consider a couple of examples: a) the depression caused by a horrifically disfiguring accident, and b) the cheerfulness (or rage) which accompanies intoxication. But, we must also note that this is *not* a one-way street, i.e., not only can a physiological condition cause a psychological disposition, but, as psychosomatic illnesses demonstrate, the mind can also produce effects in the body.[51] In light of this, we should acknowledge that it is *possible* that the physiological agreement that Nietzsche suggests the sages share could be the expression of their psychological agreement – a conclusion that reverses that of Nietzsche.

Nietzsche, having stated the physiological cause of "the great sages'" supposed "negative attitude to life," turns to the significance of their judgment of life. "Judgments, value-judgments, concerning life, for it or against it, can, in the end, never be true: they

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sees the ground of decay in the decay of institutions, he desires *old* institutions; – he sees the decay in the decay of authority: he seeks new authorities (travels abroad, into foreign literature, into exotic religions –); he desires the ideal *polis* after the concept '*polis*' has had its day … They are interested in all tyrants: they want to restore virtue by *force majeure*."

have value only as symptoms, they are worthy of consideration only as symptoms – in themselves such judgments are stupidities." Note, it is not all "value-judgments" which "can, in the end, never be true," but only "value-judgments concerning life." Nietzsche is not necessarily endorsing the Fact-Value distinction in general; rather, as we shall see, judgments concerning the value of life are of a unique character due to the nature of life itself.

> One must by all means stretch out one's fingers and make the attempt to grasp this amazing finesse, *that the value of life cannot be estimated.* Not by the living, for they are an interested party, even a bone of contention, and not judges; not by the dead, for a different reason.

Nietzsche clarifies this statement in 'Morality as Anti-Nature' (#5), where he says:

> One would require a position *outside* of life, and yet have to know it as well as one, as many, as all who have lived it, in order to be permitted even to touch the problem of the *value* of life: reasons enough to comprehend that this problem is for us an unapproachable problem.

"The living" simply cannot stand "*outside* of life;" they are party to it at all times. They are not judges because they will necessarily judge life to be good or bad based upon their own individual experience, experience which is wholly inadequate and even prejudicial to the question. Simply put, they will understand their judgment of their own life as a judgment on life *per se* – thus, their judgment "remains in the end a mere symptom of a certain kind of life: the question whether it is justified or unjustified is not even raised thereby" (TI: Morality, 5). We should note that Nietzsche is silent about another reason why "the value of life cannot be estimated." Many throughout history have held that we will in fact, with death, come to possess "a position *outside* of life" (TI: Morality, 5) – the after-life. But, if the soul is mortal, then there is no after-life and the dead cannot be judges either.[*]

The result of Nietzsche's analysis is the removal the question of the value of life as one of the fundamental questions of philosophy.[52] And, as the example of Socrates demonstrates, knowing what properly *are* the fundamental questions is enough to determine an entire way of life – that of the philosopher. In light of these two statements, Nietzsche's next sentence naturally follows: "For a philosopher to see a problem in the *value* of life is thus an objection to him, a question mark concerning his wisdom, an un-wisdom." If Nietzsche is right, then one who sees a problem in the value of life does not know the fundamental questions, and therefore is not yet a philosopher, or not yet of the first rank. Thus, Nietzsche's next questions also arise naturally from this discussion: "Indeed? All these great wise men – they were not only décadents but not wise at all?" Note, these *are* questions, and Nietzsche does not immediately provide answers. Yet, from the discussion Nietzsche does provide in these first two aphorisms of 'The Problem of Socrates,' we should notice that he never presented "these great wise men" in a manner to suggest that they saw "a problem in the *value* of life;" rather, he simply presented them as having a "negative attitude to life." In order to answer the questions he has just posed, Nietzsche will now move from the general consideration of the philosophers to a particular example, of which there is none more fitting than that of Socrates, the exemplar of the philosophic life. In light of this, it follows that Nietzsche says: "– But I return to the problem of Socrates."

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 12. "But the way is open for new versions and refinements of the soul-hypothesis; and such conceptions as 'mortal soul,' and 'soul as subjective multiplicity,' and 'soul as social structure of the drives and affects' want henceforth to have citizens' rights in science."

'The Problem of Socrates,' 3 – 4

Nietzsche's discussion of the problem of Socrates begins with Socrates' origin: "In origin, Socrates belonged to the lowest class: Socrates was plebs."[53] The use of "plebs" leads the reader think that Nietzsche is speaking of Socrates' social class, i.e., 'plebian' versus 'patrician.' If this is the case, then what Nietzsche says may be plausible, for it is given some credence by Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. There we are told, "Socrates was the son of Sophroniscus, a sculptor, and of Phaenarete, a midwife, as we read in the *Theaetetus* of Plato."[54]

In light of this, the reader familiar with Laertius' account is surprised when Nietzsche does not appeal to information about Socrates' parentage, but instead appeals to Socrates' physical appearance as grounds for classifying his origin as plebian, an appeal which suggests that appearance reveals the reality of nature. "One knows, one still sees for oneself, how ugly he was."[55] Nietzsche's suggestion is provocative; it rejects the "distinction between a 'true' and an 'apparent' world" (TI: Reason, 6) which pervades our understanding of 'reality.' And yet, our unconscious understanding of 'reality,' as revealed by our language, attests to its plausibility. For instance, 'ugly' is used to describe not only the opposite of 'beautiful,' but also actions and souls which are 'shameful.' Similarly, 'beautiful' is used to characterize grace in physical appearance, as well as action and soul, also known as 'nobility.' These overlaps in meaning are signs of a proclivity to understand aesthetic appeal (or the lack thereof) as an indication of moral worth – in the absence of other considerations, men tend to evaluate the beautiful favorably and the ugly unfavorably. Nor, we should note, are these signs unique to

English – they are also present in Greek, since *aischros* means 'ugly,' as well as 'shameful' or 'base,' and *kalos* means both 'beautiful' and 'noble' – an indication of the probability that this proclivity is universal, a potentiality rooted in human nature. In light of this, language reveals both our unconscious support of the suggested connection between appearance and 'reality,' and our instinctual prejudices in favor of beauty and against ugliness – prejudices Nietzsche will later account for (and may be seeking to exploit in giving his account of Socrates).

Note, however, that while Nietzsche does not appeal to the sort of evidence found in Laertius, he does implicitly appeal to Plato's *Theaetetus* (an authority which Laertius himself cites), though this would only be evident to a knowledgeable student of the Platonic dialogues. The pertinent passage in *Theaetetus* is as follows:

> Truly, Socrates, it is well worth while for me to talk and for you to hear about a splendid young fellow, one of your fellow-citizens, whom I have met. Now if he were handsome [*kalos*], I should be very much afraid to speak, lest someone should think I was in love with him. But the fact is – now don't be angry with me – he is not handsome [*kalos*], but is like you in his snub nose and protruding eyes, only those features are less marked in him than in you.[56]

What is pertinent to the current discussion is the partial description of Socrates: he has a "snub nose and protruding eyes," hardly the features of a "handsome" (*kalos*) man. The importance of noting this implicit appeal is two-fold: we both locate a trustworthy* authority that verifies Nietzsche's 'ugly' depiction of Socrates, and come to understand where "one still sees for oneself, how ugly [Socrates] was" – one still sees this in the Platonic account.

Nietzsche now turns to the significance of ugliness among the Hellenes: "But ugliness, in itself an objection, is among the Greeks almost a refutation." It will help us to comprehend Nietzsche's meaning if we consider it in light of what Nietzsche later says regarding "*Beautiful and ugly*" in the nineteenth aphorism of 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man.'

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* Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,' 23. "… one does not trust one's ears, even if one should trust Plato."

> Nothing is more conditional – or, let us say *narrower* – than our feeling for beauty. Whoever would think of it apart from man's joy in man would immediately lose any foothold. 'Beautiful in itself' is a mere phrase, not even a concept. In the beautiful, man posits himself as the measure of perfection […] A species *cannot* do otherwise but thus affirm itself alone. […] Man believes the world itself to be overloaded with beauty – and he *forgets* himself as the cause of this. He alone has presented the world with beauty – alas! only with a very human, all-too-human beauty … At bottom, man mirrors himself in things; he considers everything beautiful that reflects his own image: the judgment 'beautiful' is the *vanity of his species* …

What at first appears to be an account of 'beauty as subjectivity' (especially in light of the statement that the "'Beautiful in itself' is a mere phrase"), is, in the final analysis, an account of 'man as the register of beauty.' While man may be "the measure of perfection" according to which aesthetic judgments are made, he does *not* create beauty, rather he *registers* it in the peculiar effect certain things have on him, and in that sense "considers everything beautiful that reflects his own image." Both the stated conditional nature of "our feeling for beauty," and the dismissal of the "Beautiful in itself" are consistent with the objective presence of beauty in the nature of things – that is, objective differences in things, such that only some arouse the pleasure of beauty in man, others the peculiar pain of ugliness, and still others (most?), neither. Beauty is a reflection of the species which "*cannot* do otherwise but thus affirm itself alone," thus, it is both conditional upon the particular species which registers it, and unconditional from the perspective of said species. The beauty man registers is that which it is *necessary* that he register; any other notion of beauty, even that which one imagines might be apparent to only "a higher judge" (if such were to exist), being imperceptible to man, is irrelevant to him – without man, the beauty in nature would go unnoticed. The conditional nature of beauty, along with the fact that "Nothing, absolutely nothing, guarantees that man should be the model of beauty," leads Nietzsche to dismiss the "beautiful in itself," while the unconditional nature of beauty prevents all aesthetic judgments from thereby becoming purely subjective. But what is it that man objectively registers when making aesthetic judgments? To answer this we must consult the next aphorism of 'Skirmishes' (#20), which continues Nietzsche's discussion of "*Beautiful and ugly*."

Here Nietzsche states two 'truths' which are said to circumscribe judgment in the aesthetic realm: "Nothing is beautiful, only man is beautiful," and "nothing is ugly except the *degenerating* man." The first of these 'truths' can be read as implicit in the preceding discussion – that 'man is the measure' of beauty. The second 'truth,' however, emerges from the discussion which follows.

> Physiologically considered, everything ugly weakens and saddens man. It reminds him of decay, danger, powerlessness; it actually deprives him of strength.[57] One can measure the effect of the ugly with a dynamometer. Wherever man is depressed at all, he senses the proximity of something 'ugly.' His feeling of power, his will to power, his courage, his pride – all fall with the ugly and rise with the beautiful. … In both cases *we draw a conclusion*: the premises for it are piled up in the greatest abundance in instinct. The ugly is understood as a suggestion and symptom of degeneration: whatever reminds us in the least of degeneration causes in us the judgment 'ugly.'

We should note that both the psychological/physiological sensitivity to, and the corresponding reaction against, the ugly are universal, i.e., they are characteristic of man *qua* man, and as such, they provide natural support for Nietzsche's claim that ugliness is an objection in itself. Regardless, after indicating how we ought to understand the significance of ugliness – "as a suggestion and symptom of degeneration" – Nietzsche proceeds to list objective indications of it.

> Every indication of exhaustion, of heaviness, of age, of weariness; every kind of lack of freedom, such as cramps, such as paralysis; and above all, the smell, the color, the form of dissolution, of decomposition [...] all evoke the same reaction, the value-judgment, 'ugly.'

Based on this account of ugliness, we can formally understand Nietzsche's claim that "ugliness [is] in itself an objection." The judgment 'ugly' is "a suggestion and symptom" of degeneracy. It bears emphasizing that such signs are not absolutely reliable; something need not actually *be* degenerate to 'remind' man of degeneration – this is interpretation, not fact. However, whatever *is* degenerate is defective to some degree, and given that the presence of a defect is to that extent an objection to the defective thing, ugliness is then "in itself an objection."

But, a question still remains: what is indicated by the greater significance of ugliness among the Greeks? That for them ugliness was "almost a refutation" is an indication of the greater strength of the Hellenic instincts (since it is an indication that they more readily recognized, and more strongly reacted against, degeneration). Additionally, the greater strength of these Hellenic instincts itself would seem to indicate that the Hellenes recognized subtler signs of degeneration, i.e., that they possessed a more sensitive "dynamometer."

Nietzsche's next question is at first puzzling: "Was Socrates a Greek at all?" Asking the question in the context of the current discussion implies that it is prompted by Socrates' ugliness. Is Socrates' ugliness really a sign of the possibility that he was not Greek? Perhaps, if being beautiful is essential to being Greek. At this moment, it is important to note two things. First, based on Nietzsche's aesthetics, Socrates 'ugliness' merely 'suggests' – however strongly – that he is degenerate (in some respect, to some degree). And second, the question recalls Nietzsche's earlier emphatic statement that he "recognized Socrates and Plato to be symptoms of decay, tools of the Greek dissolution, pseudo-Greek, anti-Greek" (TI: Socrates, 2). Thus, it would seem that the answer to Nietzsche's puzzling question is: 'No – Socrates was merely "pseudo-Greek," even "anti-Greek."' But, this answer does little to clarify why Socrates' ugliness is itself a *sign* that he may not be Greek.

To understand Socrates' ugliness as such a sign, we must examine the relationship between beauty and 'Greekness.' The most explicit discussion of this relationship occurs in 'Skirmishes' (#47).

> In Athens, in the time of Cicero, who expresses his surprise about this, the men and youths were far superior in beauty to the women. But what work and exertion in the service of beauty had the male sex there imposed on itself for centuries! For one should make no mistake about the method in this case: a breeding of feelings and thoughts alone is almost nothing […]: one must first persuade the *body*. Strict perseverance in significant and exquisite gestures together with the obligation to live only with people who do not 'let themselves go' – that is quite enough for one to become significant and exquisite, and in two or three generations all this *becomes inward*. It is decisive for the lot of a people and of humanity that culture should begin in the *right* place […]: the right place is the body, the gesture, the diet, physiology; the *rest* follows from that ... Therefore the Greeks remain the *first cultural event* in history – they knew, they *did*, what was needed.

In concentrating on the body, the Greeks gave rise to beautiful men, who, in turn, gave rise to beautiful things – thereby they became "the *first cultural event* in history." It is clear that physical beauty is not the *telos* of breeding – it is *culture*. Even so, it is the concentration upon physical beauty that eventually results in culture, which is the essence of 'Greekness.' Thus, beauty is essential to being Greek. Only later will Nietzsche provide a discussion of the oppositional relationship of Socrates and this Greek culture, the examination of which will make explicit how Socrates was merely "pseudo-Greek," even "anti-Greek."

For now, it is important to note that Nietzsche has temporalized his discussion – he speaks of "the time of Cicero," a time over 300 years *after* the death of Socrates. Recognizing this raises the important question of whether the youths of Socrates' time also possessed 'superior beauty?' If they did, then the process which begot it must have been working for centuries before the time of Socrates – it may even have been responsible for him. We find that Nietzsche has provided the answer to this question earlier in 'Skirmishes' (#23).

> Plato goes further. He says […] that there would be no Platonic philosophy at all if there were not such beautiful youths in Athens: it is only their sight that transposes the philosopher's soul into an erotic trance, leaving it no peace until it lowers the seed of all exalted things into such beautiful soil.

That there *is* Platonic philosophy, then, is proof that the youths of the time of Socrates possessed 'superior beauty' – given the Nietzschean premises, that is – and likewise, that this process, which as we saw earlier is a work of centuries of breeding, must have been begun long before Socrates arrived upon the world stage. Since this process was still at work in the time of Cicero, we know with certainty that it continued well after Socrates. But we must still wonder about both his relationship to it, and whether he affected it.

Having alluded to the relationship between 'Greekness' and beauty, and thereby the relationship of beauty and breeding, Nietzsche turns directly to a consideration of the relationship of breeding and ugliness. "Ugliness is often enough the expression of a development that has been crossed, *thwarted* by crossing. Or it appears as *declining* development." Nietzsche's statement presents two causes of ugliness, and thereby raises the question of which applies to Socrates? Note, one cannot conflate the two. Cross-breeding could result in 'hybrid vigor' (a progeny superior to both parental stocks), which then implies that ugliness is a sign of the potential presence of such superiority. And is a philosopher not superior to both a journeyman sculptor and an ordinary midwife? We should further note that by speaking of a development "*thwarted* by crossing," Nietzsche necessarily implies the existence of a standard according to which one may judge a development's success; he implies that there is a goal toward which a development is intended to develop – that is, development is teleological in character. Generally speaking, given Nietzsche's aesthetics, the goal of *any* development in which man plays a role will always be *the beautiful*, for it is in light of his own idea of perfection that man always acts.* As Nietzsche, highlighting the importance of "good taste," later says in 'Skirmishes' (#47):

> *Beauty* [is] *no accident*. – The beauty of a race or a family, their grace and kindness in all gestures, is won by work: like genius, it is the end result of the accumulated work of generations. One must have made great sacrifices to good taste, one must have done much and omitted much, for its sake.

Ugliness, however, as the unintended by-product of the natural process of sexual procreation, *is* an accident. Nature has, presumably through the process of evolution, ensured that "good taste," as expressed in sexual attraction, is in accordance with what best promotes the health and survival of the species – 'degenerates' are not normally sought after for procreation. And although ugliness is "a suggestion and symptom of degeneration," in other words a sign of "declining development," we must not lose sight of the fact, as we noted above, that it is not invariably reliable, that it could also be a sign of 'hybrid vigor' – a possibility particularly relevant in our consideration of Socrates.

Having previously alleged a natural connection between ugliness and baseness, Nietzsche further suggests such a connection between ugliness and criminality: "The anthropologists among the criminologists tell us, the typical criminal is ugly: monstrum in fronte, monstrum in animo [monster in face, monster in soul]." In light of Nietzsche's 'truths' of aesthetics, his claim that "the criminal is a décadent" follows naturally. But it is only later in *Twilight* (Skirmishes, 45) that Nietzsche explains why this is so. The saying attributed to "The anthropologists among the criminologists" again raises the issue addressed earlier, that of the relationship between physiology and psychology. "Monstrum in fronte, monstrum in animo" implies that the appearance of the body is a reliable indication of the disposition of the soul. Here we must be careful, however. Even were the anthropologists right in concluding that "the typical criminal is ugly," it does not logically follow that the ugly are typically criminals – and such fallacious reasoning seems to be a peculiar danger in the anthropologists' maxim. Similarly, even if "the criminal is a décadent," this does not imply that every décadent is a criminal. So, while ugliness does not prove that one is a criminal, it *does* prove that one is a décadent, *if*, that is, Nietzsche's claim that "nothing *is* ugly except the *degenerating* man" is correct (TI: Skirmishes, 20).[58] Nietzsche subtly concedes the logical point with his next question, which happens to be the thirteenth of the section: "Was Socrates a typical criminal?" At most, ugliness *may* be a sign of one's being a criminal (even *if* ugliness is proof of décadence). Thus, the question which Nietzsche here raises about Socrates *is* a genuine question, even though it has the appearance of being simply rhetorical.[59]

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* Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,' 22. "No lesser authority than that of the divine Plato (– so Schopenhauer himself calls him) maintains a different proposition: that all beauty incites procreation, – that just this is the *proprium* of its effect, from the most sensual up to the most spiritual ..."

Rather than directly answering that question, however, Nietzsche offers an anecdote that would not 'contradict' an affirmative response. It is worth emphasizing that what merely does not contradict such a response does not *ipso facto* support it either – it could quite possibly be irrelevant to the question. Also note that this anecdote is offset with dashes, which perhaps again serve as a clue to the reader that he needs to depart from the text in order to consider it properly.

> – At least that would not be contradicted by the famous judgment of the physiognomist which sounded so offensive to the friends of Socrates. A foreigner who knew about faces once passed through Athens and told Socrates to his face that he *was* a monstrum [monster] – that he harbored in himself all the bad vices and appetites. And Socrates merely answered: 'You know me, sir!' –

In modern times at least, the "famous judgment" of this anonymous physiognomist is found in only two places, *De Fato* and *Tusculan Disputations*, both of which were written by the orator-statesman-philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero, who, as we noted earlier, lived and wrote over 300 years after Socrates died. Thus, we only have one ancient source for this "famous judgment." The account in *De Fato* occurs in the context of a discussion of free-will. While the whole of the discussion is interesting, the pertinent section of the text is as follows:

> Again, do we not read[60] how Socrates was stigmatized by the 'physiognomist' Zopyrus, who professed to discover men's entire characters and natures from their body, eyes, face and brow? he said that Socrates was stupid and thick-witted because he had not got hollows in the neck above the collarbone – he used to say that these portions of his anatomy were blocked and stopped up; he also added that he was addicted to women – at which Alcibiades is said to have given a loud guffaw![61]

The account in *Tusculan Disputations* occurs in a different context (during a discussion of the causes of disorders), and varies somewhat from that of *De Fato*. The pertinent section of the text reads:

> Zopyrus, who claimed to discern every man's nature from his appearance, accused Socrates in company of a number of vices which he enumerated, and when he was ridiculed by the rest who said they failed to recognize such vices in Socrates, Socrates himself came to his rescue by saying that he was naturally inclined to the vices named, but had cast them out of him by the help of reason.[62]

In light of these three accounts, we see that the anthropologists Nietzsche cited are the modern embodiment of the physiognomist whose testimony Nietzsche invokes (without naming him, despite Cicero's doing so). Their common conclusion – "monstrum in fronte, monstrum in animo" – given its inconclusive logical grounds, is at most only suggestive. We are also skeptical of the unconditional nature of Zopyrus' conclusion because it does not seem to square with our own experience, anymore than it did with those personally acquainted with Socrates – we have all met those whose body (whether beautiful or ugly) did not correspond to their soul.[63] Additionally, and importantly, like Alcibiades, we would very likely guffaw at Nietzsche's claim that Socrates "*was* a monstrum – that he harbored in himself all the bad vices and appetites." It is therefore all the more notable that Nietzsche chose only partially to reveal Socrates' support for the diagnosis of Zopyrus – "You know me, sir!" – while reserving what serves as the refutation of his conclusion – "but I mastered them all" – until he later revisits this anecdote in 'The Problem of Socrates,' 9. By initially providing only a part of Socrates' response, Nietzsche leaves the reader with the impression that Socrates simply agreed with the conclusion of Zopyrus, and therefore would similarly agree with that of the anthropologists, an impression he later obliges his reader to revise.

Returning to the question of whether Socrates was a décadent at the outset of the fourth aphorism, Nietzsche cites four pieces of evidence which suggest an affirmative answer.[64]

> Socrates' décadence is suggested not only by the admitted wantonness and anarchy of his instincts, but also by the superfetation[65] of the logical faculty and that *rachitic-sarcasm* which distinguishes him. Nor should we forget those

> auditory hallucinations which, as 'the daimonion of Socrates,' have been interpreted religiously.

Note, Nietzsche has inferred from Socrates' admission of harboring "in himself all the bad vices and appetites," an admission of the "wantonness and anarchy of his instincts." This inference only holds if "bad vices and appetites" are the direct result of "wantonness and anarchy [in the] instincts," which would then imply that virtues and good appetites are the result of restraint and order in the instincts. We will later have reason to recall this conclusion.

The second piece of evidence which allegedly suggests (hence, also does not prove) Socrates' décadence – "the superfetation of the logical faculty" – recalls Nietzsche's earlier discussion of Socrates in the thirteenth section of *The Birth of Tragedy*. There Nietzsche described Socrates as "the typical *non-mystic*, in whom, through superfetation, the logical nature is developed as excessively as instinctive wisdom is in the mystic." In *The Birth of Tragedy*, this superfetation of the logical nature is related to "the wonderful phenomenon known as 'the daimonion of Socrates'" – the fourth piece of evidence cited here in *Twilight* to suggest the décadence of Socrates. It was Socrates' "own sense" of this relationship which "found expression in the dignified seriousness with which he everywhere, even before his judges, insisted on his divine calling" (BT, 13). Using an analysis Nietzsche later supplies, this sense can be explained as follows: it was because Socrates always harvested "only danger, persecution, and calamity from his instincts, [that] his attitudes to these instincts [were] reversed too, and he [came] to experience them fatalistically," as if they were divinely sanctioned (TI: Skirmishes, 45).

Returning to the "*rachitic-sarcasm*," the third 'symptom of décadence' which is said to distinguish Socrates, we notice that Nietzsche has purposefully portrayed what could only be 'Socratic irony' as what it would commonly be interpreted (especially by those who have been subjected to it) – the frequent sarcasm of a wiseacre. By purposefully providing what he knows to be a caricature of 'Socratic irony,' Nietzsche invites the question of whether the other three pieces of 'evidence' he cites are also caricatures. The next sentence in the aphorism makes this invitation more explicit.

"Everything in him is exaggerated, buffo, a caricature; everything is at the same time concealed, ulterior, subterranean." Our understanding of this dualistic nature of Socrates is the result of his 'idealized' portrayal by Plato. By virtue of his reliance upon this portrayal, we may conclude that Nietzsche has been speaking of the *Platonic* Socrates. Later in 'Skirmishes' (#8), Nietzsche explains that this process of idealization "does *not* consist, as is commonly held, in subtracting or discounting the petty and inconsequential. What is decisive is rather a tremendous *drive to bring out* the main features so that the others disappear in the process." Thus, he justifies his conflation of the historical Socrates with the Platonic Socrates, a conflation which makes it a question of correctly understanding the Platonic Socrates. In light of this, Nietzsche's 'revealing' could simply be an attempt to provide the correct interpretation (i.e., understanding) of the Platonic Socrates. Regardless, a question arises: to what extent is Nietzsche's own caricature of the Platonic Socrates valid – a question which suggests another: what in Nietzsche's portrayal of Socrates has been hidden from view. Only after we have discovered both the truth beneath the caricature and the features which have been concealed will we have an adequate understanding of Nietzsche's own view of Socrates.

Having just warned us of Socrates' tendency to exaggerate, and of his comic side, Nietzsche concludes the aphorism thus: "– I seek to comprehend what idiosyncrasy begot that Socratic equation of reason = virtue = happiness: that most bizarre of all equations which, moreover, is opposed to all the instincts of the earlier Hellenes." It is this effort to comprehend the idiosyncrasy that begot the Socratic teachings that "Virtue is knowledge; man sins only from ignorance; [and] he who is virtuous is happy" (BT, 14), which preoccupies the following seven aphorisms of 'The Problem of Socrates.'

'The Problem of Socrates,' 5 – 11

The effort to understand the idiosyncrasy responsible for the Socratic teachings begins with a statement – "With Socrates, Greek taste changes in favor of dialectics." The statement is followed by a question concerning it – "What really happened there?" Nietzsche's statement informs us that a change in Greek taste accompanied Socrates, presumably as a result of his influence.[66] But, what is the importance of a change in taste? As Nietzsche himself recognizes elsewhere, the importance of a change in taste is considerable. The most explicit discussion of this importance is in *The Gay Science* (#39), where Nietzsche says the following:

> Change in common taste is more important than that in opinions; opinions along with proofs, refutations, and the whole intellectual masquerade are only symptoms of a changed taste and most certainly *not* what they are often taken to be, its causes. How does common taste change? Through individuals – powerful, influential, and without any sense of shame – who announce and tyrannically enforce their *hoc est ridiculum, hoc est absurdum* [this is ridiculous, this is absurd], i.e., the judgment of their taste and disgust: thus they put many more under pressure, which gradually turns into a habit among even more and finally becomes a *need of everyone*. The reason why these individuals sense and 'taste' differently is usually found in a peculiarity of their lifestyle, nutrition, digestion, maybe a deficit or excess of inorganic salts in their blood and brains – in short, in their *physis*: they have the courage to own up to their *physis* and to heed its demands down to its subtlest tones. Their aesthetic and moral judgments are such 'subtle tones' of the *physis*.[67]

We may wonder why a change in taste is more important than a change in opinions, especially since we are familiar with the claims that "the greatest thoughts are the greatest events" (BGE, 285), and that "the actions of men proceed from their opinions"[68] – claims that imply changes in opinions or thoughts should be of primary importance. But, if we also consider the idea that "the greatest part of conscious thinking must still be reckoned as instinctive activity, even in the case of philosophical thinking" (BGE, 3), as well as that most of the time the majority of men are less than thoroughly rational, then it seems we must acknowledge that instinct, of which taste is one facet (even if it has to be 'cultivated'), plays an important, perhaps dominant, role in the lives of most men. Further, we should recognize that 'taste' is more comprehensive than mere preferences for certain food, drink, music, clothing (and other such things), as it is involved in the selection and acquisition of opinions: "The beauty of a race or a family, their grace and kindness in all gestures, is won by work: like genius, it is the end result of the accumulated work of generations. One must have made great sacrifices to good taste, one must have done much and omitted much, for its sake" (TI: Skirmishes, 47). Generally speaking, for most men most of the time it is not reason or knowledge, or even opinion, that determines what he "had rather were true,"[69] but his taste: some ideas are just appealing to us.[70] Optimists tend to be attracted to optimistic thoughts; pessimists tend to favor pessimistic opinions. However, man not only has preferences for certain ideas, but also for certain methods of presenting ideas, e.g., religiously, poetically, rhetorically, dialogically, didactically, scientifically.

If we accept that instinct and taste are involved in the selection and acquisition of opinions, then we see why a change in taste is both more fundamental and more important than a change in opinion. In light of this, we may comprehend why Nietzsche has begun his effort to understand the idiosyncrasy behind the Socratic teachings in the manner that he has – by examining the Socratic taste for dialectics, and the idiosyncrasy that begot it. But in order to appreciate the change in Greek taste in favor of dialectics, we must first understand what was thereby supplanted. For this reason, the question is: "what really happened there?"

Nietzsche responds: "Above all, a *noble* taste is thus vanquished; with dialectics the plebs come to the top." While Nietzsche does not explicitly identify the noble taste that is vanquished, it seems reasonable to suppose that it is the sureness of action possessed by the noble man, and embodied in the maxim: 'never explain, never apologize.' This supposition is supported by the first reason why "Before Socrates dialectic manners were repudiated in good society: they were considered bad manners." The noble man cannot explain himself, his "grace and kindness in all gestures, is won by work: like genius, it is the end result of the accumulated work of generations" (TI: Skirmishes, 47) – it is the product of his breeding, and justified 'in action.' But when being able *rationally* to defend one's conduct becomes the standard of acceptability, the undefended (but not necessarily indefensible) traditional ways begin to crumble. Thus, dialectics were also repudiated because "they were compromising" to tradition, and thereby, to the stability and wholesomeness of the political community. For this reason "The young were warned against them."

By stating that "The young were warned against them," Nietzsche initially seems to imply that before Socrates, youths were warned against dialectics, whereas after Socrates, they were not – or, that the warning fell on deaf ears, merely by their having been *exposed* to Socrates.[71] The student of Plato's *Republic*, however, knows that Socrates (or at least the Platonic Socrates) himself warned youths against dialectics, because of the nihilistic and other politically pernicious effects of their premature exposure to it.[72] But, it is important to note that it was not until Book VII – that is, after the vulnerability of the polities' foundation in opinion had been revealed by dialectics – that this warning is articulated. In light of this, perhaps Nietzsche is reminding us of the paradox inherent in recognizing the spiritual and political dangers of dialectics – one can only use dialectics to expose them.

Nietzsche provides another reason why dialectic manners were repudiated: "Furthermore, all such presentations of one's reasons were distrusted." The distrust of dialectic argument is a result of both perceiving and treating dialectic argument as if it were eristic argument – not, that is, as a common search for truth, but as selfish pursuit of victory. This distrust of dialectic, of question and answer, is depicted in Plato's *Republic* through the character of Adeimantus.

> 'Socrates, no one could contradict you in this. But here is how those who hear what you now say are affected on each occasion. They believe that because of inexperience at questioning and answering, they are at each question misled a little by the argument; and when the littles are collected at the end of the arguments, the slip turns out to be great and contrary to the first assertions. And just as those who aren't clever at playing draughts are finally checked by those who are and don't know where to move, so they too are finally checked by this other kind of draughts, played not with counters but speeches, and don't know what to say. However, the truth isn't in any way affected by this.'[73]

Mistaking dialectics for eristics results in a misinterpretation of the dialectician. Since many perceive the goal of argument as victory and not truth, for this is the manner in which they themselves approach it, they have a tendency to regard the dialectician as nothing more than a verbal chess master. This misunderstanding is part of the reason why the dialectical philosopher is often mistaken for a sophist, who does use argumentative cleverness mainly for selfish ends.

Thus, Nietzsche explains the common 'distaste' of dialectic arguments: "Honest things, like honest men, do not carry their reasons in their hands like that. It is indecent to show all five fingers."[74] Men tend to doubt the honesty of the man who sees a need to justify himself, to persuade others of the sincerity what he says, or the propriety of what he does. It is a common belief that honest men speak frankly; that noble men habitually act rightly; that in both speech and deed, they appear as they are. However, Nietzsche hints at another 'distasteful' feature of dialectics. The dialectician can appear condescending; dialectic manners can be interpreted as the equivalent in speech of holding a child's hand when crossing the road. It is indecent or impolite for any man to adopt such a 'patronizing' attitude towards other men.[75] All men prefer to regard themselves as at least roughly the intellectual equals of everyone else, and they take offence to any suggestion to the contrary.[76]

Having addressed political reasons why dialectic manners were repudiated by the older Hellenes of noble taste, Nietzsche points to the key difference between dialectics and tradition. The traditionalist prefers to believe that "What must first be proved has little value." Tradition, for it to perform its function of unifying the political community, must be taken as the given; it must be seen as beyond question, as self-evidently true, to be authoritative. The political value of tradition lies precisely in the acceptance of its authority. Thus Nietzsche says: "Wherever authority still forms part of good bearing, where one does not give reasons but commands, the dialectician is a kind of buffoon: one laughs at him, one does not take him seriously." With the words "one laughs at him," Nietzsche calls to mind the philosopher's return to the cave as depicted in Plato's *Republic*:

> 'And if he once more had to compete with those perpetual prisoners in forming judgments about those shadows while his vision was still dim, before his eyes had recovered, and if the time needed for getting accustomed were not at all short, wouldn't he be the source of laughter, and wouldn't it be said of him that he went up and came back with his eyes corrupted, and that it's not even worth trying to go up? And if they were somehow able to get their hands on and kill the man who attempts to release and lead up, wouldn't they kill him?'[77]

Note, the last sentence of the above gives a dark hue to Nietzsche's words. Could it be that it is precisely because Socrates was taken seriously that he was killed by Athens?[78] Be that as it may, we see that when tradition is strong, when it is still part of the proper nurture of citizens, the opinions upon which a polity rests will not even be recognized as the least bit questionable. Thus, we can see why under such circumstances the dialectician will appear to be a buffoon to those in the political community who are the product of its traditional nurture. It is in light of this apparent buffoonery that Nietzsche reformulates the inquiry into the change in Greek taste: "Socrates was the buffoon who *got himself taken seriously*: what really happened there?" That he did so, that he "got himself taken seriously," may itself be an indication of cultural decay.

We might expect Nietzsche to address here the question of how Socrates got himself taken seriously by the Greeks, but he does not. Instead, at the beginning of the sixth aphorism, he takes up the question of why one would choose to use dialectic and risk being seen as a fool. Nietzsche claims, "One chooses dialectic only when one has no other means." Dialectics is a means of last resort, chosen only when there is no other choice. Further amplifying our wonder, Nietzsche reiterates a point made in the previous aphorism – "One knows that one arouses mistrust with it, that it is not very persuasive." Nietzsche appeals to our own experience in order to demonstrate the inadequate persuasive power of dialectics. "Nothing is easier to erase than a dialectical effect: the experience of every meeting at which there are speeches prove this." This appeal demonstrates his point effectively: we have all been to a "meeting at which there are speeches," and we have all left without being permanently convinced by the arguments presented there, however persuasive at the time. But, what accounts for dialectics' weak persuasive powers? Dialectic appeals to reason, and reason alone, in seeking to persuade. And while reason may be what separates man from beast, man does not always act in accordance with it – man's passion, his emotion, his desire, his spirit, his taste, his instinct, all are involved in his decision-making process, including his deciding what to believe.[79]

The juridical and martial tone of Nietzsche's claim that dialectics "can only be *self-defense* for those who no longer have other weapons," prompts us to recall a meeting where the weakness of the persuasive power of dialectical argument played an important role – the trial of Socrates. Near the beginning of Socrates' third speech in Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, he says:[80]

> Perhaps you suppose, men of Athens, that I have been convicted because I was at a loss for the sort of speeches that would have persuaded you, if I had supposed that I should do and say anything at all to escape the penalty. Far from it. Rather, I have been convicted because I was at a loss, not however for speeches, but for daring and shamelessness and willingness to say the sorts of things to you that you would have been most pleased to hear: me wailing and lamenting, and doing and saying many other things unworthy of me, as *I* affirm – such things as you *have* been accustomed to hear from others. But neither did I then suppose that I should do anything unsuitable to a free man because of danger, nor do I now regret that I made my defense speech like this: I much prefer to die having made my defense speech in this way than to live in that way.[81]

Rather than acting as "one [who] might escape death, at least, by letting go of his arms and turning around to supplicate his pursuers,"[82] Socrates chose to defend himself with dialectics. Socrates' need for self-defense draws attention to the problem that he faced – and recall, this is the secondary meaning of 'the problem of Socrates' which titles this section of *Twilight*. When the dialectical philosopher is no longer simply laughed at, but rather is taken seriously, he is taken seriously in two ways simultaneously. The youths take seriously the questions he raises, the elders the threat he poses. Socrates relates this problem in *Apology* as follows:

> For I know well that wherever I go, the young will listen to me when I speak, just as they do here. And if I drive them away, they themselves will drive me out by persuading their elders. But if I do not drive them away, their fathers and families will drive me out because of these same ones.[83]

Given that this is a problem *wherever* Socrates would go, i.e., it is applicable to *all* cities, it seems fair to assume that its origins – the attraction of youths to inquiry concerning matters of first importance, particularly justice, along with their easily provoked sense of indignation and frequent rebelliousness on the one hand, and the desire of their elders to preserve tradition, i.e., the authority of fathers and families, on the other – are natural to man, and thus inherent in political life. If this is the case, then just as it is inevitable that the youths will be drawn to the philosopher like a moth to a candle, so it is inevitable that the elders will be hostile to him, and so prefer to snuff the candle out, believing that he corrupts the youth. There is an inevitable tension between the philosopher and the city.

The recognition of this tension makes Nietzsche's next sentence all the more puzzling. "One must have to *enforce* one's right: until one reaches that point, one makes no use of it." But, what "right" is it that the dialectical philosopher must enforce? Nietzsche's claim that "The Jews were dialecticians for that reason" does little to clarify what right he is speaking of. Nor does the claim that "Reynard the Fox was one," unless, that is, Nietzsche is pointing to a natural right similar to that enjoyed by a carnivore to eat meat. In *The History of Reynard the Fox*, Reynard uses speech to enforce this right in contravention to the proclaimed "King's peace," that "all manner [of] beasts and fowls should do none harm nor scathe to any other," a legal (conventional) peace contrary to the nature of things.[84] Must the philosopher perhaps enforce a natural right to associate with youths? Later in 'Skirmishes' (#23), Nietzsche will invoke a saying of Plato which may indicate as much.

> There would be no Platonic philosophy at all if there were not such beautiful youths in Athens: it is only their sight that transposes the philosopher's soul into an erotic trance, leaving it no peace until it lowers the seed of all exalted things into such beautiful soil.

Is this need of the philosopher's soul perhaps like that of the carnivore?

Regardless, Nietzsche's final questions of the aphorism, "what? and Socrates was as well?" make explicit what was implicit in Socrates' choice to remain armed – the possibility that, unlike the Jews, or Reynard the Fox, Socrates was not a dialectician because he had no choice. But, then the question still remains: why would Socrates have chosen dialectics?

With the beginning of the seventh aphorism, Nietzsche once again confounds our expectations; we expect his discussion of Socrates' choice of dialectics to continue, but instead he takes up Socratic irony. "Is the irony of Socrates an expression of revolt? of plebian ressentiment? does he, as one oppressed, enjoy his own ferocity in the knife-thrusts of his syllogisms? does he *avenge* himself on the noble people whom he fascinates?" The rhetorical presentation of these four questions – in rapid sequence, one after another, all together in one sentence – blends them together, as if they were mere variations on a single question. But, upon reflectively rereading them, one realizes that it is necessary to consider each independently.

With respect to the first question – "Is the irony of Socrates an expression of revolt?" – it is useful to consider the following:

> Very much, not to say everything, seems to depend on what Socratic irony is. Irony is a kind of dissimulation, or of untruthfulness. Aristotle therefore treats the habit of irony as a vice. Yet, irony is the dissembling, not of evil actions or of vices, but rather of good actions or of virtues; the ironic man, in opposition to the boaster, understates his worth. *If* irony is a vice, it is a graceful vice. Properly used, it is not a vice at all: the magnanimous man – the man who regards himself as worthy of great things while in fact being worthy of them – is truthful and frank because he is in the habit of looking down and yet he is ironical in his intercourse with the many. Irony is then the noble dissimulation of one's worth, of one's superiority. We may say, it is the humanity peculiar to the superior man: he spares the feelings of his inferiors by not displaying his superiority. The highest form of superiority is the superiority in wisdom. Irony in the highest sense will then be the dissimulation of one's wisdom, *i.e.*, the dissimulation of one's wise thoughts. This can take two forms: either expressing on a 'wise' subject such thoughts (*e.g.*, generally accepted thoughts) as are less wise than one's own thoughts or refraining from expressing any thoughts regarding a 'wise' subject on the ground that one does not have knowledge regarding it and therefore can only raise questions but cannot give answers.[85]

Since the dissembling of one's wisdom, especially of one's unorthodox wisdom, is a conservative, rather than a revolutionary, act, it does not appear that Socratic irony – at least as described and explained by Leo Strauss – can be reconciled with its being "an expression of revolt." Furthermore, if Strauss' depiction is correct, then the irony of Socrates, as an act of a magnanimous man 'sparing the feelings' of his natural inferiors, simply cannot be an expression "of plebian ressentiment." Of course, 'pleb' is a conventional social category which may not congrue with a ranking grounded in nature. But in any event, Nietzsche did raise the possibility as a *question*, to which one may upon consideration answer 'No.'

Nietzsche's third question brings the discussion back to dialectics, a transition initially concealed by the rhetorical presentation. "Does he, as one oppressed, enjoy his own ferocity in the knife-thrusts of his syllogisms?" While Nietzsche explicitly asks whether Socrates uses dialectical refutations simply for his own questionable amusement, another question is implicitly raised by his return to dialectics: what is the relationship between dialectics and Socratic irony?

The answer to this second question is already known; recall, "refraining from expressing any thoughts regarding a 'wise' subject on the ground that one does not have knowledge regarding it and therefore can only raise questions but cannot give answers,"[86] is one form of irony. That is, dialectical *refutations* of people's commonly accepted but inadequate answers regarding important matters can be the most effective way of raising *questions*, but without tacitly claiming oneself superior by providing adequate answers. One can instead profess ignorance. As such, dialectics itself *can be* an expression of irony – a relationship implicit in Socrates' reputation for being dialectically ironical.[87] However, this is *not* to say that dialectics is simply an expression of irony; it is also a means of combining participants' resources in the pursuit of truth. But, insofar as dialectics both produces and conceals wisdom, it is itself in a sense inherently ironical. Nietzsche highlights this problematic or questionable nature of dialectics by the six questions of this seventh aphorism (only the first aphorism contains more). Recalling the other form of irony discussed by Strauss, and contrasting it with its dialectical form, we then recognize why Nietzsche simply associates dialectics with irony. If Socrates had *only* expressed orthodox opinions, he would not have become a problem for Athens – from the standpoint of the political community this form of irony is *much* less problematic. The only form of irony of concern in the discussion of 'the problem of Socrates' is that of dialectical refutation, as a means of *exposing* the intellectual inadequacies of his 'betters.' Yet, as is clear from the following speech from *Apology*, this form of irony is also a problem for Socrates.

> I went to one of those reputed to be wise, on the ground that there, if anywhere, I would refute the divination and show the oracle, 'This man is wiser than I, but you declared that I was wisest.' So I considered him thoroughly – I need not speak of him by name, but he was one of the politicians – and when I considered him and conversed with him, men of Athens, I was affected something like this: it seemed to me that this man seemed to be wise, both to the many other human beings and most of all to himself, but that he was not. And then I tried to show him that he supposed he was wise, but was not. So from this I became hateful both to him and to many of those present.[88]

Given this 'hateful' consequence of using dialectical refutation, we are again left asking why Socrates would have chosen to use dialectics? As it turns out, Nietzsche's explicit question has provided a possible answer: it is possible that Socrates uses dialectical refutations simply for his own questionable amusement. We know from Socrates' own speeches in *Apology* that at least the youths were amused by his dialectical antics: "the young who follow me of their own accord – those who have the most leisure, the sons of the wealthiest – enjoy hearing human beings examined."[89] And, when Socrates again brings this amusement of the youths to the minds of his judges we get his own judgment of the activity: "But why, then, do some enjoy spending so much time with me? You have heard, men of Athens; I told you the whole truth. It is because they enjoy hearing men examined who suppose they are wise, but are not. For it is not unpleasant."[90] While "it is not unpleasant" may not in itself constitute a ringing endorsement of the pleasurable nature of the activity, Socrates does provide such an endorsement in his final speech of *Apology*, i.e., after he has been sentenced to death:

> On the other hand, if death is like a journey from here to another place, and if the things that are said are true, that in fact all the dead are there, then what greater good could there be than this, judges? For if one who arrives in Hades, released from those here who claim to be judges, will find those who are judges in truth – the very ones who are said to give judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthys, and Aeacus, and Triptolemus, and those of the other demigods who turned out to be just in their own lives – would this journey be a paltry one? Or again, to associate with Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer, how much would any of you give? For *I* am willing to die many times if these things are true, since especially for myself spending time there would be wondrous: whenever I happened to meet Palamedes and Telemonian Ajax, or anyone else of the ancients who died because of unjust judgment, I would compare my own experiences with theirs. As I suppose, it would not be unpleasant. And certainly the greatest thing is that I would pass my time examining and searching out among those there – just as I do here – who among them is wise, and who supposes he is, but is not. How much would one give, judges, to examine him who led the great army against Troy, or Odysseus, or Sisyphus, or the thousand others whom one might mention, both men and women? To converse and to associate with them and to examine them there would be inconceivable happiness. Certainly those there surely do not kill on this account. For those there are happier than those here not only in other things but also in that they are immortal henceforth for the rest of time, at least if the things that are said are in fact true.[91]

It "would be inconceivable happiness" for Socrates to spend an eternity examining others to see "who among them is wise, and who supposes he is, but is not." This is positive proof that Socrates found the dialectical refutation of others quite pleasurable. And yet observe, while being immortal surely solves the problem of dialectical refutation from the standpoint of Socrates, i.e., as an immortal he need not fear being swatted for wounding the pride of very prideful men, it certainly in no way alleviates the problem from the standpoint of those whom Socrates will be examining. In fact, since they cannot swat the gadfly, it would appear that their problem would be a permanent one. Socrates' heaven would be hell for those he examines.

In light of the discussion of 'the problem of Socrates' as presented thus far, particularly the discussions of the natural repulsiveness of Socrates' ugliness, and the distasteful features of both dialectics and dialectical men, Nietzsche's fourth question is somewhat enigmatic. "Does he *avenge* himself on the noble people whom he fascinates?" We may be puzzled by Nietzsche's assertion that Socrates nonetheless fascinated the noble people, as (historically speaking) we know that he did. But having subtly presented this puzzle, he reserves examining their enigmatic fascination with Socrates until the next aphorism. Instead, Nietzsche compounds our puzzlement by providing additional reasons why dialectics would have been repudiated in polite society, and consequently, how Socrates could have (one almost says '*should* have') repelled the noble people.

"As a dialectician, one holds a merciless tool in one's hand; one can become a tyrant by means of it; one compromises those one conquers." This mercilessness, detailed in these, the only three statements of the aphorism, is rooted in the capacity of dialectics to reveal *every* opinion, whether noble and life-enhancing, or shameful and corrupting, to be insufficient. However, dialectics need not be employed mercilessly by the dialectician. If it is, one must seek a motive for his doing so. That "one *can* become a tyrant by means of it," that "one compromises those one conquers," although true, does not imply that one *will* become a tyrant, that one *will* compromise others – this "merciless tool" is employed by the dialectician at his discretion, discretion which could be quite merciful.[92] Yet, when the merciless power of dialectics *is* used, the dialectician necessarily "leaves it to his opponent to prove that he is no idiot: he makes one furious and helpless at the same time," he "renders the intellect of his opponent *powerless*." He forces his opponents, who need to defend themselves, to become dialectical – it is their last resort (cf. TI: Socrates, 6 and 10). That the one subjected to dialectics becomes "furious" as well as *intellectually* "powerless," draws our attention to that power which he does retain – it is not uncommon that men avenge intellectual slight by physical violence. Are we to see here an implicit explanation for both the trial of Socrates, and its outcome? The awareness of this consequence of using dialectics again raises the question of why the dialectician would then choose to employ it? Or more importantly, the question of why Socrates chose dialectics? With the final sentence and last two questions of the aphorism, Nietzsche raises one possibility: "What? is dialectics only a form of *revenge* in Socrates?" A possibility made only more plausible by Nietzsche's claim that "Socrates *wanted* to die" (TI: Socrates, 12).

The eighth aphorism is the central of the five aphorisms concerned with comprehending the idiosyncrasy that begot the Socratic teachings, and as is meet, it corresponds with a shift in the focus of Nietzsche's discussion. "I have given to understand how it was that Socrates could repel: it is therefore all the more necessary to explain *that* he fascinated." Having painted a decidedly ugly portrait of Socrates, perhaps as a necessary 'corrective' to Plato's having portrayed "Socrates become beautiful (*kalos*) and youthful,"[93] Nietzsche finds it necessary to explain how Socrates nonetheless fascinated. That is, he must explain Socrates' power of attraction. That this quite different kind of 'beautification' of Socrates is "all the more necessary" is a sign of Nietzsche's intention – he intends for Socrates to remain attractive, he intends for him to continue to fascinate.

Nietzsche proceeds to present three reasons why, despite both the natural repulsiveness of his ugliness, and the distasteful features of both dialectics and dialectical men, Socrates still fascinated the noble men of Athens.

> That he discovered a new kind of *agon*, that he became its first fencing[*] master for the noble circles of Athens, is one point. He fascinated by appealing to the agonistic impulse of the Hellenes, – he introduced a variation into the wrestling match between young men and youths. Socrates was also a great *erotic*.

Nietzsche emphasizes the novelty of this "new kind of *agon*," it is "a variation [in] the wrestling match of the young men and youths;" a verbal form of 'wrestling.' It is effective because youths tend to be attracted to, or fascinated by, two things: contesting and novelty. And although Nietzsche does not explicitly identify the "new kind of *agon*" discovered by Socrates, we naturally presume that it is dialectics, "which celebrates a triumph with every conclusion" (BT, 14). Our presumption is rooted in our earlier observation that dialectics is commonly mistaken for eristics, which is 'purely' agonistic – its goal being victory, not knowledge of truth. This is *not* to say that dialectics is not agonistic. The vanquishing of sophists, or the refutation of pernicious opinions and their replacement with salutary ones, along with self-conscious ignorance that comes with recognizing one's opinions are just that: opinions, not knowledge – these are likely and appropriate instances of the agonistic use of dialectics. But, since the *primary* end of dialectics is shareable truth and not victory for its own sake, it is in the first instance cooperative. Not that this implies that victory is not a goal of dialectics, but it is a victory over oneself, of self-knowledge over unconscious ignorance, of knowledge over opinion – a shining victory which can be shared infinitely without diminishing its luster. Still, the misidentification of cooperative dialectics as agonistic eristics, rather than being repulsive in the manner we noted earlier, is actually responsible for its initial outward appeal to the "agonistic impulse of the Hellenes," especially to that of the noble "young men and youths" of Athens. This outward eristical appearance will later prove to be fortunate.

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 'Why I Write Such Good Books,' The Untimely Ones, 1. "The four Untimely Ones are certainly warlike. They prove that I was no Jack the Dreamer, That I take pleasure in fencing – perhaps also that I am dangerously quick at the draw."

But, in order better to understand the profoundly agonistic nature of dialectics, a nature which is not immediately apparent, and thereby to understand its real appeal to those competitive spirits who love victory, we must consult 'Skirmishes' (#23).

> Plato goes further. He says with an innocence possible only for a Greek, not a 'Christian,' that there would be no Platonic philosophy at all if there were not such beautiful youths in Athens: it is only their sight that transposes the philosopher's soul into an erotic trance, leaving it no peace until it lowers the seed of all exalted things into such beautiful soil.[94] Another queer saint! – one does not trust one's ears, even if one should trust Plato. At least one guesses that they philosophized *differently* in Athens, especially in public. Nothing is less Greek than the conceptual web-spinning of a hermit, amor intellectualis dei [intellectual love of God] after the manner of Spinoza. Philosophy after the fashion of Plato might rather be defined as an erotic contest, as a further development and turning inward of the ancient agonistic gymnastics and of its *presuppositions* ... What ultimately grew out of this philosophic eroticism of Plato? A new art-form of the Greek agon: dialectics.[*]

Note, Nietzsche here confirms our presumption that dialectics is the "new art-form of the Greek agon." In any case, the profound agonistic nature of dialectics is a direct result of its origin in Platonic philosophy, which Nietzsche defines "as an erotic contest." The ultimate agonistic appeal of dialectics for the lover of victory is then a result of the "further development and turning inward" of the initial appeal of its outward eristical appearance. Just as victory achieved by rhetorical ability is higher than victory achieved by brachial strength (as it engages what is higher in man: his soul), so victory achieved by knowledge and sound reasoning is higher than victory achieved by persuasive, clever speech, as the former appeals to what is highest in man's soul, his rational faculties, whereas the latter exploits his passions and prejudices. To be sure, this does *not* imply that one will never have cause for recourse to these other means of victory – the given situation will determine which is appropriate[95] – rather, it simply implies the existence of a hierarchy. Nietzsche's final statement of the aphorism – "Socrates was also a great *erotic*"[96] – emphasizes that it is the *eros* of the philosopher that draws him to employ his dialectical skill with "beautiful youths." That is, since the philosopher desires to lower "the seed of all exalted things" into the souls of "beautiful youths," he must attract and seduce them. Dialectics is the means he employs to do so. Thus, we see how the outward eristical appearance of dialectics is fortunate: it attracts lovers of honor and victory, providing the dialectical philosopher with the opportunity to display this hierarchy of victories, the sight of which will draw the natural lover of victory toward the highest achievement, that of acquiring knowledge through dialectics. But, we are still left wondering: what is this "erotic contest" that takes place in the soul?

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[*] The aphorism continues: "– Finally, I recall, *against* Schopenhauer and in honor of Plato, that the whole higher culture and literature of *classical* France too grew on the soil of sexual interest. Everywhere in it one may look for the *galantarie* [gallantry], the senses, the sexual contest, 'the woman' – one will never look in vain ..."

We soon realize that this question is actually a variation of that with which we are primarily concerned, 'what is the idiosyncrasy that begot the Socratic teachings?' Or, 'what is the idiosyncrasy of Socrates?' Nietzsche directly addresses this question in the ninth aphorism.

> But Socrates guessed even more. He saw *through* his noble Athenians; he comprehended that *his own* case,[97] his idiosyncratic case, was no longer exceptional. The same kind of degeneration was quietly developing everywhere: old Athens was coming to an end. – And Socrates understood that all the world *needed* him, – his means, his cure, his personal-artifice of self-preservation …

It is important for us to note *how* Socrates came to comprehend "his own case," to understand that "all the world *needed* him:" he "guessed." Socrates instinctively "saw *through* his noble Athenians." Nietzsche reveals the significance of this instinctual capacity in 'Skirmishes' (#10). "It is impossible for the Dionysian type not to understand any suggestion; he does not overlook any sign of an affect; he possesses the instinct of understanding and guessing in the highest degree, just as he commands the art of communication in the highest degree." That Socrates "guessed" is an indication that he is a "Dionysian type."* We should further note that Nietzsche is here beginning to sketch the character of the Greek situation, one of the problems Socrates faced.

Still, what kind of degeneration did Athens and Socrates share? What cure did Socrates possess of which they were in need? Nietzsche answers immediately: "Everywhere the instincts were in anarchy; everywhere one was within five paces of excess: monstrum in animo was the general danger. 'The impulses want to play the tyrant; one must invent a *counter-tyrant* who is stronger.'" There was a battle, a contest, an agon within the soul. There are several things we should note about Nietzsche's response. First, it is not simply his own; one sentence is stated by Nietzsche, the other, as the quotation marks indicate, is spoken anonymously (we presume by Socrates). Second, note the political tone of both respondents; they both speak of the soul in political terms; Nietzsche speaks of the anarchy of the instincts, the anonymous spokesman of the tyranny of the impulses.[98] Third, between the two respondents the problem is stated four different ways – as instinctual anarchy, as approaching excess, as "monstrum in animo," and as tyrannical impulses. While it would not seem that these are all equivalent, they are evidently so related that the cure is expressed in only one way – as a counter-tyranny.

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* Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'What I Owe to the Ancients,' 1. "I have not forgotten the surprise of my honored teacher, Corssen, when he had to give his worst Latin pupil the best grade – I had finished with one stroke. Compact, severe, with as much substance as possible, a cold sarcasm against 'beautiful words' and 'beautiful sentiments' – here I guessed myself."

Fourth, the "*counter-tyrant*" of Socrates is not immediately identified. Finally, we should note that Nietzsche's formulation of the problem as "monstrum in animo" recalls a maxim mentioned earlier: "monstrum in fronte, monstrum in animo."

In light of this, we are unsurprised when Nietzsche revisits the anecdote concerning Zopyrus (whom Nietzsche continues to identify anonymously). And yet, Nietzsche still surprises us by making revisions to the account, revisions which reveal what he had earlier concealed. "When the physiognomist had revealed to Socrates who he was, a cave of bad appetites,[99] the great master of irony let slip another word which is the key to his character. 'This is true,' he said, 'but I mastered them all.'" Socrates had been depicted previously as though he were in simple agreement with the verdict of Zopyrus, that Socrates "*was* a *monstrum* – that he harbored in himself all the bad vices and appetites." But now, Nietzsche reveals Socrates' counter-argument, "but I mastered them all." (cf. TI: Socrates, 3). Nietzsche now employs this anecdote in the same manner as Cicero – Socrates is *the* example which proves that it is possible for one to master the unruly nature of his soul.[100] That Nietzsche still does not identify what it is that Socrates used to master his "bad appetites" prompts Nietzsche's next question: "*How* did Socrates become master over *himself*? –" The answer to this question provides "the key to his character."

The dash which follows the question is an indication that Nietzsche will not immediately answer the question he just raised (as it turns out, he will identify Socrates' "*counter-tyrant*" in the next aphorism). Here, Nietzsche instead returns to discuss the significance of Socrates' case for the degenerating Athenians, he thereby highlights the problem they are both said to share.

> His case was, at bottom, merely the extreme case, only the most striking instance of what was then beginning to be a universal distress: no one was any longer

> master over himself, the instincts turned *against* each other. He fascinated, being this extreme case; his awe-inspiring ugliness proclaimed him as such to all who could see: he fascinated, of course, even more as an answer, a solution, an apparent *cure* of this case. –

Note, the fact that "no one was any longer master over himself" implies that some (at least) were once in control; likewise, that "the instincts turned *against* each other" implies that they were once in harmony. Both implications can be seen as support for our previous conclusion that virtues and good appetites are the result of restraint and order in the instincts.[101] Nevertheless, Nietzsche has revealed another way in which Socrates fascinated the noble Athenians. He fascinated them with his "awe-inspiring ugliness," which proclaimed his décadence "to all who could see" (though, we suspect this is not everyone). Just as dialectics proved to be fascinating to the noble Athenians, so too did Socrates' – apparently unique – ugliness.[102] Thus, we learn that everything which was earlier presented as repulsive in Socrates actually contributed to his fascinating character. He fascinated because those "who could see" among the noble Athenians recognized their own degeneration in him, but more importantly, they recognized in him "an answer, a solution, an apparent *cure*" for their own case. However, that this cure was only "an *apparent* cure" for them – while being a *real* cure for Socrates? – may be an indication that Socrates' example is not suited for all, i.e., that Socrates' case truly is idiosyncratic, that the understanding of its universality was a *mis*understanding. *If* this is the case, then the fascinating and attractive nature of Socrates' example would itself be a problem. Further, given that Nietzsche claims that Socrates regarded life as a sickness, Socrates' cure may have only been an apparent cure for him as well (cf. TI: Socrates, 1 and 12). But, what was this apparent cure? We have again come to the question of "*How* did Socrates become master over himself."

The beginning of the tenth aphorism identifies Socrates' cure, the "*counter-tyrant*" with which he mastered himself. "When one finds it necessary to turn *reason* into a tyrant, as Socrates did, the danger cannot be slight that something else will play the tyrant." That reason *had* to be turned into a tyrant is presented as a sign that "the impulses [wanted] to play the tyrant," that "one was within five paces of excess." Nietzsche, still treating the case of Socrates as exemplary, emphasizes the universality of this necessity by mentioning it again in the next sentence. "Rationality was then guessed to be the *savior*; neither Socrates nor his 'patients' had any choice about being rational, – it was de rigeur, it was their *last* resort." Note, like the use of dialectics, the tyranny of reason is a "*last* resort," a means chosen only when there are no others.

But how did Socrates come to know that the "*savior*" was rationality? Just as "he comprehended that *his own* case, his idiosyncratic case" was becoming universal, he "guessed" it. We may wonder, what if Socrates had *not* possessed "the instinct of understanding and guessing in the highest degree" (TI: Skirmishes, 10), and had therefore neither understood the significance of his own case, nor guessed that rationality was the cure? Nietzsche, in describing the Greek situation, provides the answer: "The fanaticism with which all Greek reflection throws itself upon rationality betrays a desperate situation, there was danger, there was but one choice: either to perish or – to be *absurdly rational* ..." Does this imply that the choice would have been made regardless?[103]

Nevertheless, precisely what was the "danger" which manifested itself as the choice between absurd rationality and death? Nietzsche's ellipsis invites us to pause and fully envision it. This is facilitated by the fact that Nietzsche has previously painted a picture of it, as those familiar with *The Birth of Tragedy* will recognize.

> For if we imagine that the whole incalculable sum of energy used up for this world tendency had been used *not* in the service of knowledge but for the practical, i.e., egoistic aims of individuals and peoples, then we realize that in this case universal wars of annihilation and continual migrations of peoples would probably have weakened the instinctive lust for life to such an extent that suicide would have become a general custom and individuals might have experienced the final remnant of a sense of duty when, like the inhabitants of the Fiji islands, they had strangled their parents and friends – a practical pessimism that might even have generated a gruesome ethic of genocide motivated by pity. […] By contrast with this practical pessimism, Socrates is the prototype of the theoretical optimist who, with his faith that the nature of things can be fathomed, ascribes to knowledge and insight the power of a panacea, while understanding error as the evil par excellence. To fathom the depths and to separate true knowledge from appearance and error, seemed to Socratic man the noblest, even the only truly human vocation. And since Socrates, this mechanism of concepts, judgments, and inferences has been esteemed as the highest occupation and the most admirable gift of nature, above all other capacities. Even the most sublime ethical deeds, the stirrings of pity, self-sacrifice, heroism, and that calm sea of the soul, so difficult to attain, which the Apollinian Greek called sophrosune [moderation], were derived from the dialectic of knowledge by Socrates and his like-minded successors, down to the present, and accordingly designated as teachable. Anyone who has ever experienced the pleasure of Socratic insight and felt how, spreading in ever-widening circles, it seeks to embrace the whole world of appearances, will never again find any stimulus toward existence more violent than the craving to complete this conquest and to weave the net impenetrably tight (BT, 15).

Still, even if we did not envision the danger, it is very likely that most men, save those whose "instinctive lust for life" has been *severely* weakened (ibid), could understand the fanatical rush of the Greeks toward rationality – *if* it was truly the only alternative – after all, the choice between life and death is typically no choice at all. And yet, is this not the choice which Nietzsche claims Socrates made (cf. TI: Socrates, 1 and 12)? But, Socrates is not typical.[*]

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,' 44. "The genius – in work, in deed – is necessarily a squanderer: *that he squanders himself*, that is his greatness … The instinct of self-preservation is suspended, as it were; the overpowering pressure of outflowing forces forbids him any such care or caution. One calls this 'self-sacrifice'; one praises his 'heroism,' his indifference to his well-being,

Nonetheless, Nietzsche recognizes that the consequences of the anarchy of the instincts – the fanatical rush of the Greeks toward rationality, and therewith their acceptance of the Socratic teachings, of the Socratic way of life as the model – was the necessary result of the danger that they faced: "there was but one choice."

> The moralism of the Greek philosophers from Plato on is pathologically conditioned; so is their esteem of dialectics. Reason = virtue = happiness, that means merely that one must imitate Socrates and counter the dark appetites with a permanent *daylight* – the daylight of reason. One must be clever, clear, bright at any price: any concession to the instincts, to the unconscious, leads *downward* …

It was necessary for all to follow in the footsteps of Socrates, to live according to the Socratic teachings. Socrates won the erotic contest, he mastered himself by making reason a tyrant within his soul. It was left to everyone else to master themselves in the same way.

Nietzsche, having earlier alluded to a part of Plato's allegory of the cave when he invoked Zopyrus' verdict that Socrates was "a cave of bad appetites," completes the allusion by identifying both "reason" as the sun, and "any concession to the instincts, to the unconscious" as the path back down into the cave.[104] Recalling that the cave is presented as the universal condition of man, we see that Nietzsche's allusion verifies that Socrates' case, the anarchy of the instincts, is universal (that is, formally universal, as we will later see). The 'cure' of Socrates, the tyranny of reason, however, is revealed by the same allusion to be idiosyncratic – it is but a very few who ever exit the cave. Note, Nietzsche will reconcile this seemingly contradictory situation in the following aphorism.

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his devotion to an idea, a great cause, a fatherland: all misunderstandings … He flows out, he overflows, he uses himself up, he does not spare himself – and this is a calamitous involuntary fatality, no less than a river's flooding the land. Yet, because so much is owed to such explosives, much has also been given them in return: for example, a kind of *higher morality* … After all, that is the way of human gratitude: it *misunderstands* its benefactors." Cf. Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 28b. "I would respond to him with a just speech: 'What you say is ignoble, fellow, if you suppose that a man who is of even a little benefit should take into account the danger of living or dying, but not rather consider this alone when he acts: whether his actions are just or unjust, and the deeds of a good man or a bad.'"

Further, we recall from Plato's allegory that those who did exit and who saw the sun were not permitted to remain there, but rather, were compelled to go back down again into the cave in order to rule, thus realizing the perfectly just regime.[105] Could it be that the tyranny of reason is not a savior, that in order to rule justly in one's soul, in order to have a healthy soul, one must make concessions to the instincts?

Nietzsche begins the eleventh aphorism with a laconic summary of his discussion of how Socrates fascinated the noble Athenians. "I have given to understand how it was that Socrates fascinated: he seemed to be a physician, a savior." Nietzsche does not say Socrates *was* a physician;[106] thereby, he again intimates that the 'cure' of Socrates was only the apparent cure of the Athenians – their cases were not strictly identical with his. Nietzsche, then, asks us a question: "Is it necessary to go on to demonstrate the error in his faith in 'rationality at any price'?" Nietzsche does not ask us, as we may have expected, about the faith of the noble Athenians in the 'cure' of Socrates. Rather, he asks us about Socrates' faith in the tyranny of rationality; he asks us whether we understand why Socrates' faith in his 'cure' is an error.

He assumes we do not: "– It is a self-deception on the part of philosophers and moralists if they believe that they are extricating themselves from décadence when they merely wage war against it." Perhaps that prefatory dash is Nietzsche's signal that he will take a detour, and not speak immediately and explicitly of Socrates or the error of his faith in the tyranny of reason (as the next section, ''Reason' in Philosophy,' does). Instead, Nietzsche speaks of two groups who are, by many, mistaken for one another: "philosophers and moralists." His statement reveals a reason why this is so: both wage war against décadence. It also raises the question of *why* they engage in such warfare. Yet more importantly, Nietzsche's statement highlights the error of which philosophers and moralists may be guilty. *If* war is waged with the intention of extrication from décadence, then both philosophers and moralists deceive themselves, for "Extrication lies beyond their strength: what they choose as a means, as salvation, is itself but another expression of décadence – they *change* its expression, but they do not get rid of it itself." And yet, notice, even though *all* means of war against décadence are just "another expression of décadence," Nietzsche does *not* condemn such warfare, instead, he criticizes the presumption of what can be accomplished thereby: extrication. However, extrication may *not* be the intention of either philosophers or moralists. And further, the intentions of philosophers and moralists are *not* necessarily the same (in fact, there are grounds for suspecting otherwise). So, the question then becomes, what, respectively, is the intention of philosophers and moralists in waging war against décadence? Is one, the other, neither, or both guilty of error?

If we consult what Nietzsche later 'whispers to the conservatives,' we begin to answer these questions.

> What was not known formerly, what is known, or might be known, today – a *reversion*, a return in any sense or degree is simply not possible. We physiologists at least know that. Yet all priests and moralists have believed the opposite – they *wanted* to take mankind back, to *screw* it back, to a *former* measure of virtue. Morality was always a bed of Procrustes.[107] Even the politicians have aped the preachers of virtue at this point: today too there are still parties whose dream it is that all things might walk backwards like *crabs*. But no one is free to be a crab. Nothing avails: one *must* go forward, *step by step further into décadence* (– that is *my* definition of modern 'progress'...). One can *check* this development and thus dam up degeneration, gather it and make it more vehement and *sudden*: one can do no more (TI: Skirmishes, 43).

Observe, Nietzsche claims that this insight is novel, that it was "not known formerly." But, it is also provisional, for it "is known, or *might* be known, today." Nevertheless, we see that moralists intend to extricate not only themselves, but all of mankind from décadence. That is, the moralists erroneously believe such extrication by reversion, by going back to pre-décadent times, is possible; thus, they deceive themselves. We also notice that Nietzsche does not mention philosophers here – is his silence an indication that extrication by reversion is not their intention? Or, since Nietzsche claims his insight into the 'irreversible'* nature of décadence is novel, is his silence about the alleged self-deception of the philosophers rather an instance of his own "loftiness of the soul" (TI: Skirmishes, 46)? If, however, reversing décadence is *not* the intention of philosophers, then we must ask what is?

Nietzsche has said before that philosophers intend to discharge themselves in actions "with a view to eventually producing a genius" (BT, 15). Could this be the end of the philosophers' war against décadence? Given the outset of the very next aphorism of 'Skirmishes' (#44), it appears quite possible that it is.

> Great men, like great ages, are explosives in which a tremendous strength is stored up; their precondition is always, historically and physiologically, that for a long time much has been gathered, stored up, saved up, and conserved for them, – that there has been no explosion for a long time.

Both the position and the subject (the gathering and damming up of degeneration, which results in making it more vehement, more sudden, more *explosive*) of this statement supports the conclusion that it is essentially related to Nietzsche's discussion, in 'Skirmishes' (#43), of the impossibility of going back as a means of extricating oneself from décadence. And given both these discussions, the suggestion that the intention of philosophers is to eventually produce great men by establishing their precondition appears reasonable. This reasonableness is further supported by Nietzsche's statement that "One has renounced the *great* life when one renounces war" (TI: Morality, 3).[*]

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* Note, the use of 'irreversible' is meant to convey Nietzsche's insight into the impossibility of extricating oneself from décadence by 'reversion;' it is *not* meant to imply that décadence is permanent.

The difference, then, between the philosophers and the moralists is not one of effect, since both their respective wars against décadence, by damming up the reaction to degeneration, result in the establishment of the precondition of great men.[†] Rather, the difference between them is one of knowledge, the philosophers consciously work toward the goal that they achieve, while the moralists are mired in self-deception. And yet, the possession of this knowledge does *not* preclude the possibility that philosophers erroneously believe that they extricate themselves from décadence "when they *merely* wage war against it." Yet, *if* one claims that the philosophers hold this erroneous belief, then, one must account for why they do.

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Maxims and Arrows,' 8. "*Out of life's school of war.* – What does not destroy me, makes me stronger."

[†] Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Morality as Anti-Nature,' 6. "Let us finally consider how naive it is altogether to say: 'Man *ought* to be such and such!' Reality shows us an enchanting wealth of types, the abundance of a lavish play and change of forms – and some wretched loafer of a moralist comments: 'No! Man ought to be *different*'... He even knows what man should be like, this wretched bigot and prig: he paints himself on the wall and comments, '*Ecce homo*!'... But even when the moralist addresses himself only to the single human being and says to him, '*You* ought to be such and such!' he does not cease to make himself ridiculous. The single human being is a piece of *fatum* from the front and from the rear, one law more, one necessity more for all that is yet to come and to be. To say to him, 'Change yourself!' is to demand that everything be changed, even retroactively ... And indeed there have been consistent moralists who wanted man to be different, that is, virtuous – they wanted him remade in their own image, as a prig: to that end, they *negated* the world! No small madness! No modest kind of immodesty! ... Morality, insofar as it *condemns* for its own sake, and *not* out of regard for the concerns, considerations, and contrivances of life, is a specific error with which one ought to have no pity – an *idiosyncrasy of degenerates* which has caused immeasurable harm! – We others, we immoralists, have, conversely, made room in our hearts for every kind of understanding, comprehending, and *approving*. We do not easily negate; we make it a point of honor to be *affirmers*. More and more, our eyes have opened to that economy which needs and knows how to utilize everything that the holy witlessness of the priest, the *diseased* reason in the priest, rejects – that economy in the law of life which finds an advantage even in the disgusting species of the prigs, the priests, the virtuous. *What* advantage? – But we ourselves, we immoralists, are the answer ..."

"Socrates was a misunderstanding;[*] *the whole improvement-morality,*[108] *including the Christian, was a misunderstanding …*" Note, Nietzsche reserves his discussion of the latter misunderstanding, that which he emphasizes, until later (cf. especially TI: Morality and Improvers). In any case, Socrates is not identified as a moralist, but is somehow related to morality; as such he is meant to be understood as the representative of a particular way of life; that is, Socrates stands for philosophy, for the philosophic life. What does Nietzsche mean when he states that "Socrates was a misunderstanding?" Could he mean that the philosophic life is a misunderstanding, Socrates being its exemplar? And since Nietzsche does not identify who has misunderstood Socrates, we presume he is indicting everyone (perhaps even including Socrates), except himself. Still, it is important to note that there is at least one individual, other than Nietzsche, who did not misunderstand Socrates: Plato. We know this because it is through the Platonic Socrates that Nietzsche has been able to bring the misunderstanding of the historical Socrates to light. Finally, we should note, Nietzsche may also be identifying the origin of the philosophers' erroneous belief that they can extricate themselves from décadence *merely* by means of warring against it: their misunderstanding of the example of Socrates.

The key to grasping this misunderstanding of Socrates is to comprehend why his (apparent) faith in "rationality at any price," is an error. Thus, Nietzsche's detour is complete, and he returns to the issue with which he opened the aphorism (this 'return' being signaled by the ellipsis).

> The most blinding daylight, rationality at any price, to live brightly, coldly, cautiously, consciously, without instinct, in opposition to the instincts – all this too was a mere disease, another disease, and by no means a return to 'virtue,' to

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,' 44. "After all, that is the way of human gratitude: it *misunderstands* its benefactors."

> 'health,' to happiness ... To *have* to fight the instincts – that is the formula of décadence: as long as life is *ascending*, happiness equals instinct.[109] –

Nietzsche's description of the common understanding of the philosophic life, of the life led by Socrates, is worth repeating: "The most blinding daylight, rationality at any price, to live brightly, coldly, cautiously, consciously, without instinct, in opposition to the instincts." Not only does Nietzsche again allude to Plato's allegory of the cave by speaking of the daylight of reason, but his "formula of décadence," as a fight to rule in the soul, also reminds one of Book VII of Plato's *Republic*: "When ruling becomes a thing fought over, such a war – a domestic war, one within the family – destroys these men themselves and the rest of the city as well."[110] Thus, Nietzsche presents tyrannical rationality – i.e., the tyrannical rule of reason in the soul, with a constant civil war between reason and the desires and passions – as simply another form of décadence; it is a décadent rationality. By implication, then, it would seem that Socrates, his morality of "rationality at any price," and thus, the philosophic life are all décadent.

However, Nietzsche can be read as claiming that the common understanding of Socrates (and the philosophic life of which he is the exemplar) is a *mis*understanding. He also thereby implicitly claims possession of the correct understanding, an understanding which, presumably, he depicts here in 'The Problem of Socrates.' Thus, it seems, we must ask whether the décadent depiction of the Socratic way of life is born out by Nietzsche's own portrayal of Socrates. It does not appear that it is. Nietzsche did not portray Socrates as "bright," open, clear, but as "concealed, ulterior, subterranean." He was not said to be "cold," but rather "a great erotic." Further, Socrates used dialectical refutation, "got himself taken seriously," and in the end he got himself killed – hardly the actions of a "cautious" man. But most importantly, Socrates did *not* live "without instinct, in opposition to the instincts." Rather, he lived in accordance with "the instinct of understanding and guessing" (TI: Skirmishes, 10); he "guessed" rationality was the cure for his case, and lived accordingly. Instead of constantly warring with his instincts, he made concessions to them.[*]

Since Socrates did not *have* to fight the instincts, and *having* to fight the instincts is, as Nietzsche claims, "the formula of décadence," it seems that Socrates was *not* a décadent. But, insofar as both the instinctive rationality of Socrates, and his "equation of reason = virtue = happiness," are "opposed to all the instincts of the earlier Hellenes," not to mention the instincts of most men at any time, the manifestation of Socratic rationality and 'virtue' in others is, generally speaking, décadent. This being the case, then to the extent that Socrates taught this décadent morality to those who did not share his instincts, he was guilty of corruption.

Further, the fascinating character of Socrates, that "he seemed to be a physician, a savior," is itself part of the problematic character of Socrates; he attracts not just those for whom his example is suited, but also those for whom it is not, and who as a result of imitating him, will splatter Philosophy with mud.[111] The problem is: those who perceive the healthful 'effects' of rationality in Socrates' case mistake rationality for the cause of the healthiness of Socrates' soul, when in fact his relentless rationality is simply an effect of his healthy soul. The common misunderstanding is the result of the first 'great error,' that of confusing cause and effect (cf. TI: Errors, 1-2). Thus, tyrannical rationality is mistakenly identified as a means of warfare by which one can reverse décadence, as a means of 'going back,' as a 'cure,' whereas, Socrates' *instinctual* adoption of a relentless rationality reveals that he was *not* décadent to begin with.

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 13. "We are offered a key to the character of Socrates by the wonderful phenomenon known as 'the daimonion of Socrates.' In exceptional circumstances, when his tremendous intellect wavered, he found secure support in the utterances of a divine voice that spoke up at such moments. This voice, whenever it comes, always *dissuades*. In this utterly abnormal nature, instinctive wisdom appears only in order to *hinder* conscious knowledge occasionally."

It will help us to better understand this if we recognize that Nietzsche has *implicitly* provided his own 'moral' equation: 'virtue' = 'health' = happiness = instinct[112] – an equation which holds "as long as life is *ascending*." As is meet, this matter of central importance is discussed in the central section of *Twilight*, 'The Four Great Errors,' in the central aphorism (which also happens to be the central paragraph) of the work (#2).[113]

> The most general formula on which every religion and morality is founded is: 'Do this and that, refrain from this and that – then you will be happy! Otherwise ...' Every morality, every religion, *is* this imperative; I call it the great original sin of reason, the *immortal unreason*. In my mouth, this formula is changed into its opposite – *first* example of my 'revaluation of all values': a well-turned-out human being, a 'happy one,' *must* perform certain actions and shrinks instinctively from other actions; he carries the order, which he represents physiologically, into his relations with other human beings and things.[114] In a formula: his virtue is the *effect* of his happiness ... A long life, many descendants – these are *not* the wages of virtue: rather virtue itself is that slowing down of the metabolism which leads, among other things, also to a long life, many descendants – in short, to *Cornarism*. – The church and morality say: 'A generation, a people, are destroyed by license and luxury.' My *restored* reason says: when a people approaches destruction, when it degenerates physiologically, then license and luxury *follow* from this (namely, the craving for ever stronger and more frequent stimulation, as every exhausted nature knows it). This young man turns pale early and wilts; his friends say: that is due to this or that disease. I say: *that* he became diseased, *that* he did not resist the disease, was already the effect of an impoverished life or hereditary exhaustion. The newspaper reader says: this party destroys itself by making such a mistake. My *higher* politics says: a party which makes such mistakes has reached its end – it has lost its sureness of instinct. Every mistake in every sense is the effect of the degeneration of instinct, of the disintegration of the will: one could almost define what is *bad* in this way. All that is *good* is instinct – and hence easy, necessary, free. Laboriousness is an objection, the god is typically different from the hero (in my language: *light* feet are the first attribute of divinity).

'If you are happy – you will do this and that, and refrain from this or that. Otherwise …'

Thus spoke Nietzsche.

It seems that Nietzsche seeks to revive the noble taste which was vanquished by dialectics, the noble taste embodied in the sureness of action summed up in the maxim: 'never explain, never apologize.' It seems that he seeks a "reversion" after all – what he later, when 'whispering to the conservatives,' says is not possible: – "one *must* go forward, *step by step further into décadence*" (TI: Skirmishes, 43). But, while Nietzsche may seem to contradict himself, he doesn't necessarily, for he may reach the goal of 'conservatives' by pressing forward, driving thru décadence. He may not be seeking a 'resurrection,' but rather, a *rebirth* of nobility.

As we noted earlier, Nietzsche's insight into the 'irreversible' nature of décadence is provisional, it "might be known" (ibid). Then again, it might not be. It might not be known, because it cannot be, because it is not *true*. But, *if* it is not true, then we must ask: why would Nietzsche lie? Out of love or politeness (cf. TI: Skirmishes, 46)? Or, perhaps like the dying Socrates whose last words may have been intended to aid those who still had not 'learned how to die,' Nietzsche intends his words to assuage the indignation of the conservatives to whom he whispers, conservatives who must live in a décadent world. But, what if Nietzsche is *not* lying, and it *is* a self-deception to believe that one extricates oneself from décadence when one merely wages war against it? Even if this is so, it appears that Nietzsche does not contradict himself insofar as he does not intend to "*merely* wage war," but instead seeks to change taste (i.e., cultivate certain instincts), just as Socrates is said to have done.

Regardless, how is Nietzsche's equation of 'virtue' = 'health' = happiness = instinct revealing of the example of Socrates? The answer requires that we recall once more what Nietzsche said in *The Birth of Tragedy* regarding Socrates 'daimonion.'

> We are offered a key to the character of Socrates by the wonderful phenomenon known as 'the daimonion of Socrates.' In exceptional circumstances, when his tremendous intellect wavered, he found secure support in the utterances of a divine voice that spoke up at such moments. This voice, whenever it comes, always *dissuades*. In this utterly abnormal nature, instinctive wisdom appears only in order to *hinder* conscious knowledge occasionally (13).

Socrates himself acknowledges this idiosyncrasy of his instincts:

> Perhaps, then, it might seem to be strange that I do go around counseling these things and being a busybody in private, but that in public I do not dare to go up before your multitude to counsel the city. The cause of this is what you have heard me speak of many times and in many places, that something divine and daimonic comes to me, a voice [...] This is something which began for me in childhood: a sort of voice comes, and whenever it comes, it always turns me away from whatever I am about to do, but never turns me forward. This is what opposes my political activity, and its opposition seems to me altogether noble.[115]

It seems that from "childhood" on Socrates has 'shrunk instinctively' from certain actions. And the fact that Socrates finds "inconceivable happiness"[116] in conversing, associating, and examining others, suggests that Socrates "*must* perform" these actions (TI: Errors, 2) – a necessity which would also demonstrate that "he carries the order, which he represents physiologically, into his relations with other human beings and things" (ibid). That is, it demonstrates that reason is dominant within his soul by nature. Together, these three things suggest that Socrates is an example of "a well-turned-out human being, a 'happy one'" (ibid), in the sense of which Nietzsche discusses it – i.e., Socrates' instincts = his happiness = his 'health' = his 'virtue.'

But, the natural order (the health) of Socrates' soul is *not* universal. In fact, the problem is that it can be a sickness when 'forcibly' manifested in his fellows. Nietzsche provides a fuller account of this in *The Gay Science* (#120).

> *Health of the soul*. – The popular medical formulation of morality (the originator of which is Ariston of Chios), 'virtue is the health of the soul', would, in order to be useful, have to be changed at least to read, 'your virtue is the health of your soul'. For there is no health as such, and all attempts to define such a thing have

> failed miserably. Deciding what is health even for your *body* depends on your goal, your horizon, your powers, your impulses, your mistakes and above all on the ideals and phantasms of your soul. Thus there are innumerable healths of the body; the more one allows the particular and incomparable to rear its head again, the more one unlearns the dogma of the 'equality of men', the more the concept of a normal health, along with those of a normal diet and normal course of illness, must be abandoned by our medical men. Only then would it be timely to reflect on health and illness of the *soul* and to locate the virtue peculiar to each man in its health – which of course could look in one person like the opposite of health in another. Finally, the great question would still remain whether we can *do without* illness, even for the development of our virtue; and whether especially our thirst for knowledge and self-knowledge do not need the sick soul as much as the healthy; in brief, whether the will to health alone is not a prejudice, a cowardice and piece of most refined barbarism and backwardness.

Put simply, as a result of their possessing different natures, the health of one man's soul is not the same as that of another; thus, each is characterized by a different 'virtue.' However, this 'relativity' of health and virtue does *not* mean that virtue is utterly subjective. Rather, virtue *is* rooted in nature, in the *natural* order of one's soul, or, in other words, it is the perfection of one's particular nature. Further, this teleological conception of virtue does not preclude the possibility that individuals may share a similarity of particular natures, and thus share a similar perfection of it. That is, it is possible that individuals share a particular 'virtue' with some, but not all, others.

In light of this, we comprehend why Socrates' faith in "'rationality at any price' is an error" – Socrates' 'cure' is corrupting, not curative, because it is only suitable to those who essentially share his case. *If* Nietzsche is suggesting that Socrates had faith in the universal applicability of his 'cure,' then Nietzsche is also suggesting that Socrates misunderstood himself, that is, misunderstood his uniqueness. But this seems unlikely of someone who spent his life examining both himself and others through dialogue.

‘The Problem of Socrates,’ 12

Having spent the last seven aphorisms seeking “to comprehend what idiosyncrasy begot that Socratic equation of reason = virtue = happiness” (TI: Socrates, 4), Nietzsche begins this twelfth and final aphorism of ‘The Problem of Socrates’ with a question concerning Socrates’ comprehension of himself: “– Did he himself still comprehend this, this most brilliant of all self-outwitters?” Nietzsche follows this with another question, which happens to be the last of the section: “Was this what he said to himself in the end, in the *wisdom* of his courage to die?” Note, even in dying Socrates manifests the two cardinal virtues intrinsic to the philosophic life: wisdom and courage. Nevertheless, this second question seems to require an affirmative response to the first; it seems to require that Socrates “still” comprehended his own idiosyncratic and problematic character, that he knew that he represented a problem for his fellow Athenians. Further, it seems to suggests that death was the only solution to ‘the problem of Socrates.’ If this is true, it certainly is a ‘deadly truth.’ Given the above, the subtle suggestion of the first question, that Socrates did *not* desire this comprehension, that “this most brilliant of all self-outwitters” unsuccessfully sought to outwit himself in this regard, appears plausible. His desire is also understandable, for “Even the most courageous among us only rarely has the courage for that which he really *knows*” (TI: Maxims, 2) – a maxim especially true with regard to *self*-knowledge.[*]

Nietzsche, in posing the second question, understandably characterizes Socrates’ acceptance of death as courageous, but why does he emphatically pronounce it to be wise as well? In characterizing Socrates' choice as wise, Nietzsche is *not* suggesting that the judgment of the "wisest men of all the ages" that life is "worthless" is correct – which would make death choice-worthy for all. Rather, he is suggesting that for *Socrates* death was choice-worthy – *when*, that is, he chose it: he was 70 years old. Why this is so we will only discover later. That Nietzsche is not claiming that Socrates (passively) accepted death, but rather, that Socrates (actively) *chose* death, is evident from the next sentence: "… Socrates *wanted* to die: – not Athens, but *he* himself chose the mug of poison; he forced Athens to poison him …" Note, Nietzsche portrays Socrates as suicidal, a state of mind commonly associated with depression, irrationality, and even madness – he seems to subtly taint, thereby, both the courage and the wisdom manifest in Socrates' choice to die. Regardless, while Nietzsche does not provide an explicit clue as to the basis of his claim regarding Socrates' conscious choice of death, we recognize it as an interpretation of the Platonic account of Socrates' trial – and it is a most plausible one at that.[117]

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, ‘Maxims and Arrows,’ 5. “I want, once and for all, *not* to know many things. – Wisdom sets limits to knowledge too.” There are two things which sets limits to knowledge: ‘I’ and ‘Wisdom;’ only if one were simply wise would wisdom alone set the limits. Note, an essential part of becoming wise is learning what the important questions are, as these are the limits to knowledge which wisdom itself would set.

Recall from Plato's *Apology*[118] that after he had 'apologized' in a manner which made the guilty verdict not unexpected (indeed, almost guaranteed), Socrates was free to propose an acceptable counterproposal in lieu of death. The first 'punishment' which he proposed was that he be given his meals in the Prytaneum so that he could have the leisure to continue to exhort the city. In recognition of the fact that this 'punishment,' though fitting absolutely, is not fitting from the perspective of his judges (after all, they *have* found him guilty of what they regard as serious crimes, and thus are certain not to *reward* him for them), Socrates undertakes an examination of possible alternatives. He begins with an examination of punishments which he will *not* propose because he believes himself to be worthy of nothing bad. The first two of these are prison, or a fine and imprisonment until he pays (which, since he is poor, amounts to imprisonment). Since the badness of imprisonment is self-evident to his judges (who are free-men), Socrates does not need to provide any further explanation of why he will not propose it. Contrarily, the badness of exile (the third punishment which he will not propose), is not self-evident, for an exiled one is still both alive and free. Thus, Socrates must explain why he chooses to close the door on this one *perfectly acceptable* punishment (almost surely many of those who voted him guilty presumed he would give them this alternative). Socrates will not propose exile because it would require that he cease to philosophize – a divine activity that makes life worth living for a human being, at least that is how he describes it. That Socrates' living freely in exile requires the abandonment of philosophy is because of the inherently fascinating character of the philosopher. Thus, it is in the course of Socrates' explanation of why he will not propose exile that we first discover the universality of 'the problem of Socrates,' i.e., the inevitable tension which exists between the philosopher and the city. As such, that exile is not a solution to 'the problem of Socrates' may be another reason Socrates does not propose it.[119] In the end, Socrates finally chooses to propose two alternative punishments, both of which the judges deem unacceptable, since they entail nothing bad for Socrates: a fine of as much as he himself could pay (one mina of silver). Or, a substantial fine to be guaranteed (meaning paid) by his friends (thirty minae of silver). Thus, since Socrates *chose* not to propose an acceptable alternative punishment, since he consciously *chose* to close the door on the one perfectly acceptable punishment that his judges likely expected him to propose (exile), he left them with little choice but to condemn him to death. Or, as Nietzsche said, Socrates "forced Athens to poison him."

Still, we wonder why Socrates would choose to die. To alleviate our wonder Nietzsche once again seemingly invokes the 'last words' of the dying Socrates: "'Socrates is no physician,' he said softly to himself, 'here death alone is the physician … Socrates himself has only been sick a long time …'" However, since we are already familiar with Socrates' 'last words' as depicted in *Phaedo* (examined in our analysis of the first aphorism), we readily recognize that Nietzsche is once again substituting an interpreted paraphrase. Comparing this paraphrase to that provided in the first aphorism, we notice one important difference. While the sentiments concerning life embodied in both are identical (life is a disease), the 'last words' of the dying Socrates as portrayed here in the twelfth aphorism are "said softly *to himself*." That is, they *are* in accordance with the wish Nietzsche expressed in *The Gay Science* (#340):

> I admire the courage and wisdom of Socrates in everything he did, said – and did not say. This mocking and enamored monster and pied piper of Athens, who made the most overweening youths tremble and sob, was not only the wisest chatterer of all time: he was equally great in silence. I wish he had remained taciturn also at the last moment of his life, – in that case he might belong to a still higher order of spirits. Whether it was death or the poison or piety or malice – something loosened his tongue at that moment and he said: 'Oh Crito, I owe Asclepius a rooster.' This ridiculous and terrible 'last word' means for those who have ears: 'Oh Crito, *life is a disease*.' Is it possible! A man like him, who had lived cheerfully and like a soldier in the sight of everyone, – should have been a pessimist! He had merely kept a cheerful mien while concealing all his life long his ultimate judgment, his inmost feeling! Socrates, Socrates *suffered life*! And then he still revenged himself – with this veiled, gruesome, pious, and blasphemous saying! Did a Socrates need such revenge? Did his overrich virtue lack an ounce of magnanimity? – Alas, my friends, we must overcome even the Greeks!

By ascribing such pessimistic 'last words' to Socrates in *private*, Nietzsche tries to make his interpretation more plausible – that the 'last words' of the dying Socrates were a reflection of "his ultimate judgment, his inmost feeling;" that they were *not* said for the benefit of his friends, helping them to reconcile with death. Further, Nietzsche once again makes it appear as though Socrates is simply tired of living, and that in choosing to die, he could well have been simply following the Silenic advice that Nietzsche will later provide in *Twilight* to "pessimists and other décadents:" to correct the mistake of one's birth by suicide (TI: Skirmishes, 36).* But, paradoxically, for *Nietzsche's* 'dying Socrates' to display this 'greatness in silence,' Nietzsche himself must publicly reveal what his Socrates said softly only to himself, thereby defeating the purpose of his Socrates' silence. By once again making Socrates' 'last words' public, Nietzsche restores the possibility that, even in this instance, these words are not a reflection of Socrates' "ultimate judgment, his inmost feeling," but rather, are indeed intended to aid those who have not yet 'learned how to die.' Further, Nietzsche's 'private' presentation of 'the judgment' gives it the appearance of greater authority, thereby making it more 'believable.' In fact, Nietzsche's publicizing of his Socrates' 'last words' raises the possibility that Nietzsche, in communicating them, is trying to appropriate the magnanimity of this act by being the one to aid those who are in need – especially those who to any extent admire Socrates. In any case, Nietzsche's proposed explanation of why Socrates chose to die, that life is a sickness and that Socrates was tired of it, might be satisfactory – *if*, that is, it is supported by the Platonic account. Thus, we ought to investigate whether that is the case.

But first, we note that Socrates' long-time 'sickness' recalls the "great question" that Nietzsche acknowledged at the end of *The Gay Science* (#120), and which we did not address earlier: "whether we can *do without* illness, even for the development of our virtue; and whether especially our thirst for knowledge and self-knowledge do not need the sick soul as much as the healthy." The "great question" is whether the quest for knowledge and self-knowledge, the quest for wisdom, philosophy, is necessarily connected to décadence or sickness. This is a question Nietzsche had earlier raised in this section of *Twilight* when he asked: "Could it be that wisdom appears on earth as a raven, inspired by a little whiff of carrion?" (TI: Socrates, 1) That Nietzsche presents this as a "great question" is an indication that we should at least consider the possibility. That the answer may shed some light on Socrates' sickness, and thus on why he chose to die, makes it necessary that we do so.

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* Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,' 36. "Finally, some advice for our dear pessimists and other décadents. It is not in our hands to prevent our birth: but we can correct this mistake – for in some cases it is a mistake."

On the basis of Nietzsche's own (equally 'idiosyncratic'?) 'moral' equation ('virtue' = 'health' = happiness = instinct), we know that the noble man whose instincts (like those of the ancient Hellenes) are by nature harmonious, possesses a soul that is by nature healthy. He is, accordingly, by nature both virtuous and happy. Such a man has no need, nor desire, to question and examine why this is so; for him it just is. He just instinctively acts rightly. Everything in him is "easy, necessary, free" (TI: Errors, 2); there is no 'erotic contest' in his soul. In light of this, it would seem that the natural possession of a healthy soul would provide no *internal* impetus for one to undertake the dedicated introspection necessary to gain self-knowledge.

The man whose instincts are not so harmoniously ordered by nature, however, is by nature at war with himself; within him an 'erotic contest' rages. According to Nietzsche's equation, the possession of contradictory instincts necessarily implies the possession of incompatible potential happinesses. What do such internal (psychological) contradictions result in? In answering this question, it is helpful to recall the discussion from Book VII of *Republic*, where Socrates spoke of experiences which "summon the intellect:"

> 'The ones that don't summon the intellect,' I said, 'are those that don't at the same time go over to the opposite sensation. But the one's that do go over I class among those that summon the intellect, when a sensation doesn't reveal one thing any more than its opposite, regardless of whether the object strikes the senses from near or far off.[120]

What Socrates observes about contradictory perceptions 'summoning the intellect' would pertain equally to contradictory instinctual impulses. Presuming this to be so, then, we can see that an action which produces both happiness and unhappiness, should "summon the intellect," causing it to "undertake a consideration." Further, the recognition that a particular impulse ruling in the soul is the cause of health in one individual, while causing sickness in another, should also "summon the intellect." This latter possibility implies that one may not need to be sick oneself, but rather, need only be surrounded by sick souls of varying natures,[121] i.e., life within a décadent polity may be an *external* impetus which promotes both introspection and the examination of others.[*] Thus, it certainly seems plausible that, at least with respect to "our thirst for knowledge and self-knowledge," we do in fact "need the sick soul as much as the healthy." This provides a possible explanation for Nietzsche's later statement that "The price of *fruitfulness* is to be rich in internal opposition; one remains *young* only as long as the soul does not stretch itself and desire peace …" (TI: Morality, 3). If philosophy requires "the sick soul as much as the healthy," if it requires that one "be rich in internal opposition," it certainly would be understandable *if* the reason why Socrates wanted to die were because he was literally both sick *and tired* – the precise explanation that Nietzsche puts forward by invoking Socrates' supposed 'last words.'

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 427. "The appearance of the Greek philosophers from Socrates onwards is a symptom of décadence; the anti-Hellenic instincts come to the top. The 'Sophist' is still completely Hellenic – including Anaxagoras, Democritus, the great Ionians – but as a transitional form. The *polis* loses its faith in the uniqueness of its culture, in its right to rule over every other *polis* – One exchanges cultures, i.e., 'the gods' – one thereby loses faith in the sole prerogative of the *deus autochthonus*. Good and evil of differing origin are mingled: the boundary between good and evil is blurred – This is the 'Sophist' – The 'philosopher,' on the other hand, is the *reaction*: he desires the *old* virtue. He sees the ground of decay in the decay of institutions, he desires *old* institutions; – he sees the decay in the decay of authority: he seeks new authorities (travels abroad, into foreign literature, into exotic religions –); he desires the ideal *polis* after the concept '*polis*' has had its day … They are interested in all tyrants: they want to restore virtue by *force majeure*."

Thus, we again return to the question of whether Nietzsche's explanation is supported by the Platonic account. And yet, as mentioned previously, a conclusive examination requires a complete interpretation of *Phaedo*, something which I cannot pretend to provide here. In light of this, any conclusions reached hereafter will be necessarily provisional.

Nevertheless, there is an exchange in the dialogue which, on the surface at least, seems to contradict Nietzsche's interpretation. The dialogue began with the arrival of Socrates' friends just as he is released from his bonds. They found Socrates seated, with Xanthippe next to him holding one of his sons. When she noticed Socrates' friends, she said, "Socrates, now's the last time your companions will talk to you and you to them!"[122] That is, she observed that this will be the occasion for Socrates and his friends to engage in a final conversation and to say their farewells. With the conversation having barely begun, Socrates deems it proper to inquire "what Crito here wants," as it seemed to him that Crito had "been wanting to say something for a long time now" (since he arrived one presumes).[123] And so, we hear from Crito:

> 'What else but this, Socrates,' said Crito, 'that for a long time now the fellow who's to give you the potion has been telling me that I should warn you to converse as little as possible? He says people who do a lot of conversing get all heated up and that one mustn't interfere in any such way with the potion. He says if that does happen, sometimes those who do this sort of thing must be compelled to drink it twice and even three times.' And Socrates said, 'Let him be! Just have him prepare his potion and be ready to give it twice and, if he must, even three times.'[124]

This is hardly the response one would expect of a Socrates who was sick and tired of life. If he had been, it is probable that he would have heeded the warning and not engaged in conversation *all day long.*[125] Rather, it would seem more likely that he would have avoided making it that much more difficult for the potion to take effect. Thus, in a sense, the very existence of this dialogue could be seen as a refutation of Nietzsche's interpretation that Socrates was sick and tired of life.

But, then, why *did* Socrates want to die, and why was his choice a wise and correct one? In order to facilitate examining this question, I will cite at length the interpretation of Socrates' final words provided in the superb 'Introduction' to *Phaedo* by Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage and Eric Salem.

> How we interpret the last words of Socrates, so redolent of the Theseus-theme of salvation, depends on what we think Socrates has been attempting to save his friends from, on who we think the real Minotaur of the *Phaedo* is. Certainly the fear of death is a prime candidate, and no doubt Socrates in his closing words expresses his gratitude to higher powers for his having been successful, at least on this occasion, in preventing his friends from being consumed by that fear. But as we have seen, at the center of Plato's labyrinth we find not the fear of death but the hatred of argument. Perhaps this is the deeper reason behind Socrates' thank-offering: On the day he died, surrounded by intensely anxious friends, he did indeed somehow manage to ward off the fear of death. But he did so not, as we have seen, by constructing irrefutable 'proofs for the immortality of the soul,' but by redirecting his friends' care to the renewed life of philosophic inquiry and discourse. Socrates thus dies bequeathing a task, not just to Simmias, but to all who know of Phaedo's account, when he says: 'What you say is good, but also our very first hypotheses must nevertheless be looked into for greater surety.'
>
> Perhaps there is a second and harsher reason why Socrates himself, just before he drinks the potion, takes on the guise of the Minotaur. Perhaps there is something deadly even and especially about *him* – something from which, along with the fear of death and hatred of argument, his friends need to be saved. Socrates in the *Phaedo* is surrounded by loving admirers who cannot bear to lose Socrates the man. The conversation begins, we recall, with Socrates' (to all appearances) blithe acceptance of death. This is taken hard by Simmias and Cebes, at least at first. In their indignation born of grief, they accuse Socrates of injustice to his friends. In effect, they cast him as a Theseus who saves his friends and fellow journeyers from all sorts of dangers only to abandon them in the end, as Theseus abandoned Ariadne on the isle of Naxos. Just before Socrates dies, it

> seems appropriate, then, that Socrates try to deliver his friends from the final Minotaur – their engrossing love of Socrates the man, a love that threatens to fill the soul with grief and indignation. He shows them the face that has the power to rivet attention on the man rather than on the speech and vision for which the man lived. The understandable fixation with Socrates the man is touchingly enacted in Crito's stubborn attentiveness to Socrates' body. This perhaps explains why Plato presents himself as absent on this momentous day. Unlike Apollodorous, Crito, Simmias and Cebes and all the others, Plato is not threatened by the most potentially seductive of all Minotaurs: He knows Socrates well enough to be willing to let the man Socrates die. Ironically, he is also the one who, in his dialogues, keeps Socrates perpetually alive for us readers – alive, enchanting and perhaps also *dangerous*.[126]

Paying particular attention to the "second and harsher reason," we catch a glimpse of why it was wise and correct for Socrates to choose to die. Because of the attachment of others to "Socrates the man," an attachment, as we have previously mentioned, that is shared by modern men, Socrates had to die in a manner that would allow him the opportunity to "try to deliver his friends from the final Minotaur – their engrossing love of Socrates the man, a love that threatens to fill the soul with grief and indignation." Socrates had to die while he still had the ability both to say farewell and to give a final account of himself. In light of this, Nietzsche's own observations later in 'Skirmishes' (#36) provide the best description of Socrates' situation, and thus, the best explanation of his choice.

> To die proudly when it is no longer possible to live proudly. Death freely chosen, death at the right time, brightly and cheerfully accomplished amid children and witnesses: then a real farewell is still possible, as the one who is taking leave *is still there*; also a real estimate of what one has achieved and what one has wished, drawing the *sum* of one's life [...] Here it is important to defy all the cowardices of prejudice and to establish, above all, the real, that is, the physiological, appreciation of so-called *natural* death: which is in the end also 'unnatural,' a kind of suicide. One never perishes through anybody but oneself. But usually it is death under the most contemptible conditions, an unfree death, death *not* at the right time, a coward's death. From love of *life*, one should desire a different death: free, conscious, without accident, without ambush (TI: Skirmishes, 36).

That Socrates lived and died proudly is plainly evident to anyone the least bit familiar with *Apology*– Socrates did not grovel like so many others.[127] Further, as Socrates himself observed therein, death's ambush would have come shortly, and would have thereby deprived him of the opportunity to help his friends deal with their grief at the loss of Socrates the man: "At any rate, if you had waited a short time, this would have come about for you of its own accord. For you see that my age is already far advanced in life and close to death."[128] Thus, Socrates was running out of time to help his friends. From Nietzsche's words above, we see that the fact that Socrates *wanted* to die is *not* proof that he was either a pessimist or a nihilist, that he hated life, that he was sick and tired of life – *and* that Nietzsche knows this perfectly well. Rather, it is out of "love of life," and *especially* the love of the lives of his friends (and, through Plato's depiction, the lives of all who are familiar with it), that he chose to die when and in the manner that he did. Thus, we see why *a freely chosen* death was the *only* solution to the problem of Socrates' fascinating character, and thus, why Nietzsche characterized Socrates' freely chosen death as both courageous and wise.

Conclusion

Having reached the end of 'The Problem of Socrates' we note that Nietzsche has only partially revealed the problematic character of the Greek situation (the remaining details are scattered throughout *Twilight*, especially in 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man' and 'What I Owe to the Ancients'). Recalling that we assumed this to be one of the secondary meanings of 'the problem of Socrates,' we may wonder, then, whether Nietzsche's account as presented here is complete. Our wonder, however, is misplaced, for we were mistaken in our assumption. Nietzsche's intention in this section is to provide an account of 'the problem of *Socrates*,' *not* an account of the problematic situation of his fellow Greeks. The historical situation, being accidental, is relevant only to the extent that it is essentially connected with Socrates' problem.[*] There is only one significant feature of said situation that is so connected, and it is that which Nietzsche *has* revealed: the universal instinctual anarchy which forced the general adoption of Socrates' 'cure,' the problem which both he and his fellow Athenians were said to share (at least formally). It is this feature that was said to be responsible for why Socrates fascinated his fellows – "he seemed to be a physician, a savior."[129] It is this feature which led to his being taken seriously, and which entailed both him becoming a problem for Athens, and Athens becoming a problem for him. In light of this, we should not be surprised that Nietzsche chose to reveal *only* that feature of the Greek situation which is necessary in order to understand Socrates' problematic character here in 'The Problem of Socrates.'

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[*] Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,' 44. "Once the tension in the mass has become too great, then the most accidental stimulus suffices to summon into the world the 'genius,' the 'deed,' the great destiny. What does the environment matter then, or the age, or the 'spirit of the age,' or 'public opinion'! – Take the case of Napoleon. Revolutionary France, and even more, pre-Revolutionary France, would have brought forth the opposite type; in fact, it *did*. And because Napoleon was *different*, the heir of a stronger, older, more ancient civilization than the one which was then going to pieces in France, he became the master there, he *was* the only master. Great men are necessary, the age in which they appear is accidental; that they almost always become masters over their age is only because they are stronger, because they are older, because for a longer time much was gathered for them. The relationship between a genius and his age is like that between strong and weak, or between old and young: the age is relatively always much younger, thinner, more immature, less assured, more childish. – That in France today they think *quite differently* on this subject (in Germany too, but that does not matter), that the milieu theory, which is truly a neurotic's theory, has become sacrosanct and almost scientific and has found adherents even among physiologists – that 'smells bad' and arouses sad reflections."

That aside, what, then, have we come to understand about 'the problem of Socrates'? Above all, we understand the problem of his inherently fascinating character, which attracts not only those for whom his example is suited, but also those for whom it is *not*. This 'problem of Socrates' is timeless and universal, that is, it is present at all times, in all places, and as such, it is quite possible that it does not admit of a solution. Further, this is 'the problem of Socrates' which is manifest in modern man's refusal to give up the glorified example of Socrates.[130] But the possibility that there is no solution did not prevent Nietzsche from attempting to provide one by portraying Socrates *superficially* as a pessimist and a décadent. That this would be the conclusion of most readers at the end of a first reading of 'The Problem of Socrates' is not surprising, particularly in light of Nietzsche's rhetorical presentation, particularly the numerous seemingly – but only seemingly – 'rhetorical' questions he asks throughout. Further, it is a conclusion explicitly supported by Nietzsche's interpretation of Socrates' 'last words,' an interpretation he presents both at the beginning and at the end of the section, and which the 'first-time' reader is unlikely to challenge.

But by invoking the 'last words' of Socrates, Nietzsche is invariably pointing his reader back to the Platonic account, and thus is inviting him to assess the interpretation Nietzsche has presented. And, as we have argued, Nietzsche's superficial interpretation is not adequate – as Nietzsche himself indicates elsewhere in the text. Hence, not only may we reject Nietzsche's superficial interpretation of *Phaedo*, we need not do so on the grounds that Nietzsche himself did not understand the Platonic account. In fact, the fuller analysis of 'the problem of Socrates' attests otherwise. Thus, it seems that we must conclude that Nietzsche is *knowingly* providing a false account of Socrates' 'last words' to those readers who do not consider the implications of what he says elsewhere in *Twilight*, much less compare his account with Plato's. That is, we must conclude that Nietzsche is intentionally deceiving such readers. This raises two questions: why does he do so? And, what is result thereof?

This second question will be addressed first. By emphasizing the *apparently* suicidal nature of Socrates at both the beginning and the end of 'The Problem of Socrates,' i.e., in the places where the reader is likely to be paying the most attention to what is said, Nietzsche potentially obscures the fascinating features of Socrates' character that he reveals elsewhere. As we noted during our examination of the twelfth aphorism, Nietzsche deliberately portrays Socrates as if he were suicidal, a state of mind commonly associated with depression, irrationality, and even madness. This portrayal subtly taints the courage and the wisdom Nietzsche rightly notes is manifest in Socrates' choosing to die when he did, and so obscures the magnanimity of that choice, thereby diminishing the luster of his example. By doing this, Nietzsche makes Socrates less admirable, but no less intriguing. Such 'tarnishing' of Socrates' example is a necessary 'corrective' to Plato's having portrayed "Socrates become beautiful (*kalos*) and youthful."[131] This is necessary in order to repel those who are not really suited for the philosophic life, but who may be tempted to take it up (or stay with it) for reasons quite extraneous to philosophy.[132] In the common, glorified understanding of Socrates, he is seen to be 'a martyr for truth;' and while martyrdom is both appealing (as it is seen to be honorable), and fascinating (as it is seen to require greatness of soul), simple suicide, on the other hand, is as repugnant as weakness and pessimism, subject to pity not praise.

But, what does Nietzsche achieve by this deception? If the deception is successful, such that those who are thereby deceived find Socrates' example to be repulsive, then it would seem that Nietzsche, by repelling those for whom Socrates' example is not naturally suited, has accomplished two things of great importance. First, he has deflected the unsuitable from pursuing a way of life that would not be personally satisfying, perhaps even corrupting. Nietzsche is, then, their savior. Second, he has protected philosophy from the political damage that is caused by inept practitioners.[133] Thus, Nietzsche's deception seems to be a possible solution to the permanent problem of Socrates' fascinating character. But, it is important to note that it is at best only a partial solution, as it is provided only to those who read Nietzsche's account, and who are persuaded by his superficially pessimistic portrayal of Socrates. And yet, it may be precisely among his readers that Nietzsche finds those most in need of his 'antidote,' as few men who have not already been 'bitten' by the 'rabid dog' of philosophy will ever read *Twilight*. Still, the question of what moves Nietzsche remains. And while this cannot be answered definitively, it is possible that Nietzsche is moved by the same thing as Socrates in *Phaedo*: by love, and particularly the love of the lives of others (cf. TI: Skirmishes, 36 and 46).[134]

And yet, Nietzsche knows that his solution is partial, that Socrates will continue to attract those who will imitate his example. Moreover, as we mentioned earlier, it *is* Nietzsche's intention that Socrates *still* remain attractive, that he continue to fascinate – Nietzsche *is* concerned with promoting philosophy, but for those for whom it is suited:

Twilight is a fish hook after all (EH: Books: BGE, 1). Thus, Nietzsche is also concerned with revealing what that example really is, with dispelling the common misunderstanding of Socrates (and by extension, of the philosophic life). This required that he emphasize, not only the attractive features of the philosophic life (e.g., that it is a quest for the highest kind of victory), but the problematic and conventionally distasteful ones as well (e.g., the effects of dialectical manners). Further, he had to warn of the danger, both personal and political, inherent in Socrates' example, a warning which may only serve to attract those few who positively desire "to venture into all sorts of situations in which one may not have any sham virtues, where, like the tightrope walker on his rope, one either stands or falls – or gets away" (TI: Maxims, 21).

Nietzsche achieved all of this by presenting what he claims to be the correct interpretation of the Platonic Socrates, an interpretation which is not blinded by Plato's idealization. Plato's Socrates was chosen as the authentic depiction of the example of the historical Socrates because Plato is trustworthy.* And yet, Nietzsche apparently contradicts this verdict when he later says in 'What I Owe to the Ancients' (#2): "Do not throw Plato at me. I am a complete skeptic about Plato … In the end, my mistrust of Plato goes deep." But, this apparent contradiction is reconciled by Nietzsche's statement on 'faith,' a statement provided in 'Skirmishes' (#12): "The craving for a strong faith is *no* proof of a strong faith, but quite on the contrary. *If one has it*, then one can afford the beautiful luxury of skepticism: one is sure enough, firm enough, has ties enough for that." In light of this, it seems reasonable to conclude that Nietzsche can afford "the beautiful luxury" of being a "complete skeptic about Plato," harboring a deep mistrust of him, but only because he has the strongest faith in him. And thus, it is fitting to note that the reader who desires to imitate the example of Socrates – and who thus endeavors to uncover the understanding of his example as presented by Nietzsche here in 'The Problem of Socrates' – must be both trusting and skeptical of *both* Nietzsche and Plato. By requiring that his readers think *everything* through for themselves, that they take nothing simply on faith, but that they verify all that he has said, Nietzsche succeeds in promoting inquiry, in promoting philosophy. That is, he succeeds in lowering "the seed of all exalted things" into the "beautiful soil" of the souls of his suitable readers (cf. TI: Skirmishes, 23).

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* Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,' 23. "… one does not trust one's ears, even if one should trust Plato."

Endnotes

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[1] Sallust, *The Jugurthine War/The Conspiracy of Catiline*, trans. S. A. Handford, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), 175.

[2] Walter Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 463.

[3] Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*, 463.

[4] Walter Kaufmann, 'Editor's Introduction,' 657-670, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, (New York: Modern Library, 1968), 658.

[5] William H. Schaberg, *The Nietzsche Canon: a publication history and bibliography*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 155.

[6] Leo Strauss, *The City and Man*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 53. Strauss asks that the reader compare to his account to that of Plato (*Phaedrus*, 275d4-276a7 and 264b7-c5).

[7] Note, all citations of *Twilight of the Idols* follow the Walter Kaufmann translation. Some have minor emendations for the purpose of rendering certain German words consistently in English; these will not be noted. Any major departures from Kaufmann, however, will be noted. Further, all punctuation and emphasis has been altered to accord with that of the first German edition, whose publication Nietzsche supervised.

[8] Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1960), I.39-68. *Twilight of the Idols* (*Götzen-Dämmerung*) serves a 'double' allusion: to Bacon, and to Wagner's great conclusion to *The Ring of Nibelung*: *Twilight of the Gods* (*Götterdämmerung*).

[9] As reproduced in Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*, 464.

[10] R. J. Hollingdale, 'Introduction,' in *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ*, (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1974), 7-17.

[11] Tracy Strong, 'Introduction,' in *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. Richard Polt, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), vii-xxviii.

[12] Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*, 463-4.

[13] Hollingdale, 'Introduction,' in *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ*, 14-5.

[14] Strong, 'Introduction,' in *Twilight of the Idols*, ix.

[15] Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*, 464.

[16] David S. Thatcher, 'A Diagnosis of Idols,' 250-68, in *Nietzsche-Studien: Internationales Jahrbuch für die Nietzsche-Forschung*, Band 14, 1985, 252.

[17] Thatcher, 'A Diagnosis of Idols,' 251-2.

[18] If one ignores this misinterpretation of the situation surrounding Gast's letter, one finds that the remainder of Thatcher's article provides an interesting and convincing examination of the metaphorical coherence of the chosen title. He begins by acknowledging that the importance of the titles of Nietzsche's works "is often assimilated only retrospectively, that is, after the book to which they profess to be the signpost has been read and thoroughly digested" (250). Thatcher then proceeds to sketch the philosopher's possible psychological reaction "to the warlike tenor of Gast's remarks" (254). His sketch allows him to

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demonstrate why "it is no wonder that the hammer in the subtitle of *Götzen-Dämmerung*, construed in the context of Nietzsche's growing belligerence and megalomania, has been seen as belonging to some philosophic Thor bent on iconoclastic rampage, and assumed to be a club … or a sledge-hammer" (257).

Having successfully "dispel[ed] some persistent misconceptions surrounding Nietzsche's title" (250), Thatcher then looks to "shed some new light on [Nietzsche's] metaphorical ingenuity" (250). He first provides an account of Nietzsche's previous uses of the image of the hammer, which he says "can be classified into three main groups: the sculptor's hammer, the blacksmith's hammer and the law-giver's hammer" (258). This sets the stage for the introduction of a new class:

> the hammer of the physician, the 'Perkussionhammer,' an instrument employed in 'Auskultation,' … defined in medical dictionaries as a means of investigating the functions or conditions of the respiratory, circulatory and digestive organs by listening, either directly or through a stethoscope or other instrument, to the sounds these organs themselves emit or which are elicited by techniques of percussion (264).

But in the final analysis, Thatcher thinks he is forced to conclude that "It could also be argued that 'Götzen-Dämmerung,' as a title, is lacking in metaphorical consistency" (267). This is the result of two significant oversights in his argument, oversights that, when addressed, significantly strengthen it.

The first oversight involves the role of the 'idols' outside of the 'Preface.' Thatcher states that "apart from an early reference to philosophers as "deise Herren Begriffs-Götzendiener," ["these honorable idolators of concepts" (TI: Reason, 1)] there are no further allusions to idols as such in the entire book, if the incidental, and rather gratuitous, references to the title are excepted" (262). Thatcher's observation is absolutely correct, but this is not the result of metaphorical inconsistency on the part of the philosopher; rather it has a pedagogic purpose. At the end of the 'Preface,' Nietzsche explicitly states that he will not employ the term 'idol' for the remainder of the book – "nor does one ever say idol, especially not in the most distinguished instance" (TI: Preface). That Nietzsche leaves the identification of the idols in the book to the reader requires the reader to learn how to identify them for themselves.

The second oversight involves Nietzsche's use of the simile: "touched with a hammer as with a tuning fork" (TI: Preface). Thatcher asserts that since "The tuning fork *produces* the sound; [and] the hammer *elicits* it" (267), "The simile simply does not stand up to scrutiny" (267). It is as a result of his inability to square this simile with his conception of 'the hammer' that Thatcher concludes that the possibility of metaphorical inconsistency still exists. But, as Tracy Strong concisely suggests in his 'Introduction' to *Twilight of the Idols*: "The hammer functions … as a 'tuning fork' to the idols, that is, as a way both of questioning whether or not they sound true when struck while at the same time sounding a true note" (Strong, ix-x). Thatcher simply overlooked a type of hammer he had referred to earlier: "the railwayman's hammer, used to check for cracks in the wheels of trains" (257), and by extension, the principle that unifies this type with that of the physician – diagnosis – and reveals what is properly the fourth class of hammer – the hammer of the diagnostician, which are employed precisely as Strong suggests.

[19] Cf. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 'Why I write Such Good Books,' Beyond Good and Evil, 1. "The task for the years that followed was delineated as sharply as possible. After the Yes-saying part of my task had been solved, [i.e., *Zarathustra*] there came the turn of the No-saying, *No-doing* part: the revaluation of all values hitherto, the great war, – conjuring up a day of decision. This included the slow search for those related to me, those who, out of strength, would offer me their hands *for destroying*. – Thenceforth all my writings are fish hooks: perhaps I know how to fish as well as anyone?... If nothing was *caught*, I am not to blame. *There were no fish* ..."

[20] Cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers I*, trans. R. D. Hicks, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 149.

[21] Plato, 'Second Letter,' trans. Glen R. Morrow, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 314c. (Cited hereafter as *Second Letter*.)

[22] Cf. Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers I*, 281.

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[23] Cf. Plato, *Plato's Phaedo*, trans. and eds. Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage and Eric Salem, (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing/R Pullins Company, 1998), 60cd-61c. (Cited hereafter as *Phaedo*.)

[24] Was it perhaps the insight that knew "that he knew *nothing*" (BT, 13), and thus that he could not be certain that philosophy was the highest muse, that allowed him to turn and finally question everything, even the philosophic life? In the end it seems Socrates became musical by virtue of first being philosophic. If this is the case, then the true picture of Socrates must take this into account.

[25] Cf. Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom, (USA: Basic Books, 1968), 485c. (Cited hereafter as *Republic*.)

[26] The reference to 'idols' in the title also invokes those of Francis Bacon.

[27] In the Netherlands the practice of *euthanasia* is not limited to "the competent, terminally ill, who ask for it," but also "the competent … with incurable illnesses or disabilities," the "competent depressed people," the incompetent, e.g. Alzheimer's patients, "who would have asked for it if they were competent," and now "children under the age of 12, if doctors believe their suffering is intolerable or if they have an incurable illness." See Wesley J. Smith, "Now They Want to Euthanize Children," in *The Weekly Standard*, 09/13/2004.

[28] Nietzsche's relationship to the Revaluation of All Values is not entirely clear. One the one hand, many letters and passages of text – including this one – seem to claim this task for Nietzsche, but on the other hand, many letters and passages of text also seem to disavow this very claim, leaving the task to one stronger than he – often to Zarathustra. Some passages are a little more ambiguous, placing Nietzsche's craft between "Overthrowing idols" and erecting new ones (cf. *Ecce Homo*: 'Preface,' 2). Regardless, the Revaluation of All Values remains the destined task of a philosopher, whether or not Nietzsche himself claims that destiny.

[29] Réne Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, trans. Donald A. Cress, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980), Part III.

[30] Plato, *Republic*, 516e.

[31] The reader familiar with Nietzsche's correspondence would recognize the importance of this subtle reference to *The Case of Wagner* (*Der Fall Wagner*). As cited previously, letter to Paul Deussen (14 September 1888): "My publisher already has another manuscript, which is a very stringent and subtle expression of my whole *philosophical heterodoxy* – hidden behind much gracefulness and mischief. It is called 'Müssiggang eines Psychologen.' In the last analysis, both these works [*Der Fall Wagner* and *Müssiggang eines Psychologen*] are only recuperations in the midst of an immeasurably difficult and decisive task which, *when it is understood*, will split humanity into two halves. Its aim and meaning is, in four words: *revaluation of all values*." While knowledge of Nietzsche's correspondence allows one to conclude that the means being discussed are for the sake of convalescence, the reader who is reading *Twilight of the Idols* for the first time must wait for this to become clear.

[32] This translation is my own, made in consultation with other formulations and *A Latin Dictionary*, ed. Lewis and Short, (No Publisher or Date). *Animi* has been rendered Spirits (Souls) in order make more explicit the connection to the German idea of *geist* as well as the later discussion in 'The Problem of Socrates' where Socrates' monstrous soul (*animo*) is discussed.

[33] Aulus Gellius, *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*, vol. 3, trans. John C. Rolfe, (London: William Heinmann, 1927), 335.

[34] Aulus Gellius, *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*, vol. 3, 337. (with minor variations) The original Latin is as follows:

> *Sanguine diluitur tellus, cava terra lutescit.*

Omnia noctescunt tenebris caliginis atrae.
Increscunt animi, virescit volnere virtus.
Sicut fulica levis volitat super aequora classis,
Spiritus Eurorum viridis cum purpurat undas.
Quo magis in patriis possint opulescere campis.

[35] *A Latin Dictionary*, ed. Lewis and Short, (No Publisher or Date), *noctesco*, 1212; *opulesco*, 1273.

[36] *A Latin Dictionary*, *virescit*, 1995; *purpuro*, 1493-4.

[37] Cf. pages 11-12 above.

[38] *Exodus* 20: 4; *Deuteronomy* 5: 8. Cf. *Leviticus* 19: 4; 26: 1, 30.

[39] *Exodus* 20: 5.

[40] Francis Bacon speaks of his idea of "the idols and false notions which are now in possession of the human understanding" (I.38), in Book I of *The New Organon*. While the whole of Bacon's discussion is relevant to *Twilight of the Idols*, of particular interest to the current discussion of Nietzsche 'subjectivism' is his discussion of both "the Idols of the Tribe" (I.45-52) and "the Idols of the Cave" (I.53-58). To provide the reader an indication of the relevance of these two discussions I will provide in full the aphorisms where Bacon preliminarily describes these two classes of idols:

> XLI
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> The Idols of the Tribe have their foundation in human nature itself, and in the tribe or race of men. For it is a false assertion that the sense of man is the measure of things. On the contrary, all perceptions as well of the sense as of the mind are according to the measure of the individual and not according to the measure of the universe. And the human understanding is like a false mirror, which, receiving rays irregularly, distorts and discolors the nature of things by mingling its own nature with it. (I.41)
>
> XLII
>
> The Idols of the Cave are the idols of the individual man. For everyone (besides the errors common to human nature in general) has a cave or den of his own, which refracts and discolors the light of nature, owing either to his own proper and peculiar nature; or to his education and conversation with others; or to the reading of books, and the authority of those whom he esteems and admires; or to the differences of impressions, accordingly as they take place in a mind preoccupied and predisposed or in a mind indifferent and settled; or the like. So that the spirit of man (according as it is meted out to different individuals) is in fact a thing variable and full of perturbation, and governed as it were by chance. Whence it was well observed by Heraclitus that men look for sciences in their own lesser worlds, and not in the greater or common world. (I.42)

[41] See the discussion of David S. Thatcher's article 'A Diagnosis of Idols,' in note 17, for an account of the relationship of the hammer and the idols in *Twilight of the Idols*. Of particular note is Thatcher's discussion of "the hammer of the physician, the 'Perkussionhammer,' an instrument employed in 'Auskultation,'" (264), and its relationship to Tracy Strong's interpretation of the hammer as tuning fork simile.

[42] In German folklore the pied piper is one who uses his ability to attract others to lead them to their destruction. In light of this, we can see Nietzsche as luring the 'idols' to speak those things that will identify them as flawed, those things that undermine one's faith in them, those things that the 'idols,' or more specifically, those whose power is based upon those 'idols,' would rather were left unsaid.

[43] Another of Nietzsche's works was also born out of a 'convalescent' time. Cf. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism,' 1.

[44] See Hollingdale, 'Introduction,' in *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ*, 15-5; Polt, *Twilight of the Idols*, 3 n. 4; and Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*, 463-4.

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[45] The reader of *Twilight of the Idols* should remember Nietzsche's concern with "maintaining cheerfulness" in the 'Preface.'

[46] On the ubiquitous acceptance and authority of the complete misunderstanding of Nietzsche in contemporary times, Nietzsche has interesting things to say. Cf. *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Maxims and Arrows,' 15. "Posthumous men – I, for example – are understood worse than timely ones, but *heard* better. More precisely: we are never understood – *hence* our authority…" One can also find evidence of Nietzsche's awareness of the very likely possibility that he would be misunderstood in *Ecce Homo*, 'Preface,' 1. "Under these circumstances I have a duty against which my habit, even more the pride of my instincts, revolt at bottom – namely, to say: *Hear me! For I am such and such a person. Above all, do not mistake me for someone else.*"

[47] Normally we would not think of Socrates as weary, his endurance of all things is legendary. He is typically described as barefoot whether it is summer or winter. He outlasts all others in everything, whether on military campaign or discussing and drinking – not to speak of the stamina he displays in partaking and recounting the *Republic*: three days awake speaking about justice.

[48] Cf. Plato, *Phaedo*, 118a.

[49] However, this presupposes that these "wisest men" had no reason to dissemble, no reason to conceal their true judgment. But, bearing in mind the possibility of Socrates' magnanimity as expressed in *Phaedo*, this should be a question. In light of this, it is possible that their agreement in their expressed opinion is no more than evidence of their common judgment in favor of uttering this melancholic judgment "concerning life." This naturally leads to a further question of why they may have deemed it necessary (or salutary) to utter what they did. Or, what is the significance of this alternative basis of agreement. Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,' 46. "*Here the view is free.* — It may be loftiness of the soul when a philosopher is silent, it may be love when he contradicts himself; and he who has knowledge maybe polite enough to lie. It has been said, not without delicacy: *Il est indigne des grand coeurs de répandre le trouble qu'ils ressentent*. But one must add that not to be afraid of *the most unworthy* may also be greatness of soul. A woman who loves, sacrifices her honor; a knower who 'loves' may perhaps sacrifice his humanity; a God who loved became a Jew ..."

[50] See my previous chapter on *The Birth Tragedy*, in particular the section 'Socrates in *The Birth of Tragedy*' for an overview of Nietzsche's analysis.

[51] That the mind and body can affect each other in a deleterious manner further implies that they can affect each other in a constructive fashion as well. Later Nietzsche will speak of the relationship between one's physiological condition and one's psychological disposition, but a discussion of this relationship is beyond the scope of the task at hand. Cf. *Twilight of the Idols*, 'The Four Great Errors,' 2. "The most general formula on which every religion and morality is founded is: 'Do this and that, refrain from this and that – then you will be happy! Otherwise...' Every morality, every religion, *is* this imperative; I call it the great original sin of reason, the *immortal unreason.* In my mouth, this formula is changed into its opposite – *first* example of my 'revaluation of all values': a well-turned-out human being, a 'happy one,' *must* perform certain actions and shrinks instinctively from other actions; he carries the order, which he represents physiologically, into his relations with other human beings and things. In a formula: his virtue is the *effect* of his happiness ... A long life, many descendants – these are *not* the wages of virtue: rather virtue itself is that slowing down of the metabolism which leads, among other things, also to a long life, many descendants – in short, to *Cornarism*. – The church and morality say: 'A generation, a people, are destroyed by license and luxury.' My *restored* reason says: when a people approaches destruction, when it degenerates physiologically, then license and luxury *follow* from this (namely, the craving for ever stronger and more frequent stimulation, as every exhausted nature knows it). This young man turns pale early and wilts; his friends say: that is due to this or that disease. I say: *that* he became diseased, *that* he did not resist the disease, was already the effect of an impoverished life or hereditary exhaustion. The newspaper reader says: this party destroys itself by making such a mistake. My *higher* politics says: a party which makes

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such mistakes has reached its end – it has lost its sureness of instinct. Every mistake in every sense is the effect of the degeneration of instinct, of the disintegration of the will: one could almost define what is *bad* in this way. All that is *good* is instinct – and hence easy, necessary, free. Laboriousness is an objection, the god is typically different from the hero (in my language: *light* feet are the first attribute of divinity)."

[52] The removal of the question of the value of life as one of the fundamental questions of philosophy is also necessary on the grounds that 'life' is the given, i.e. the question of whether it would be better if there was no life at all is irrelevant as there is life. In light of this, one can see life as the ultimate criterion, meaning that one's reasoning, in the absence of God, in the final analysis, must square with the primacy of the existence of life.

[53] Cf. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 61. "In the meantime, religion also gives a section of the ruled guidance and opportunity for preparing itself for future rule and command; that is to say, those slowly rising orders and classes in which through fortunate marriage customs the strength and joy of the will, the will to self-mastery is always increasing – religion presents them with sufficient instigations and temptations to take the road to higher spirituality, to test the feelings of great self-overcoming, of silence and solitude – asceticism and puritanism are virtually indispensable means of education and ennobling if a race wants to become master over its origins in the rabble, and work its way up towards future rule." Is Socrates perhaps one who became "master over [his] origins in the rabble, and [worked his] way up towards future rule"?

[54] Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. R. D. Hicks, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), II.18. Cf. Nietzsche, *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers*, 'Socrates,' (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 143. "His father, Sophroniscus, being from the gens of the Daidalids, and his mother, Phaenarete, being a midwife, he distinguishes himself from all previous philosophers by his plebian origins and by an altogether meager education." Note, Nietzsche has modified the Laertian account of Socrates' father, changing the word for 'sculptor' *lithourgou* to 'Daidalids,' which is close to *Daidallô* which also means 'sculptor.' But, *Daidallô* also means 'clever' and may be related (at least phonetically) to *Daedalus*. We should also note that the above information concerning Sophroniscus is not found in *Theaetetus*, only that concerning Phaenarete is located there. In Pausanias' *Description of Greece*, we find two mentions of Socrates in conjunction with Sophroniscus, both of which attribute certain sculptures of "the Graces" to Socrates, not to Sophroniscus (cf. I.xxii.8 and IX.xxxv.7).

[55] Note I have departed from Kaufmann's translation of the text here, adopting that of Hollingdale with a slight modification – the addition of "still," which has been added because of the presence of the German word "noch." Kaufmann's translation of *man* as 'we' instead of as 'one' obscures the difference between *man* and *wir*. Nietzsche seems to employ *wir* in order to indicate his inclusion, while this may not be the case with *man*, it thus seems prudent to maintain the distinction.

[56] Plato, *Theaetetus*, trans. M. J. Levett rev. Myles Burnyeat, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 143e. Plato's *Theaetetus* is not the only source where we find a description of Socrates' 'ugliness.' Of particular note is the 'beauty contest' between Socrates and Critobulus in Xenophon's *Symposium*, v.1-9 (cf. *Symposium*, iv.19), where Socrates is compared to "Silenuses."

[57] The reader should recall Nietzsche's statement in the 'Preface:' "Excess of strength alone is the proof of strength." Note, in the following discussion 'strength' is consistently used to translate *kraft*.

[58] Emphasis on 'is' added.

[59] This question can only be answered by considering Nietzsche's account of Socrates, as presented in the whole of 'The Problem of Socrates,' in light of the rest of the book.

[60] Note, this is an indication that Cicero must have had a source for this anecdote that has not survived to the present day – not that this strengthens its veracity for either Nietzsche or ourselves.

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[61] Cicero, *De Fato*, trans. H. Rackham, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1942), v.10-11.

[62] Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J.E. King, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971), VI.xxxvii.80-81.

[63] Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 402d-e.

"Then," I said, "if the fine dispositions that are in the soul and those that agree and accord with them in the form should ever coincide in anyone, with both partaking of the same model, wouldn't that be the fairest sight for him who is able to see?"

"By far."

"Now the fairest is the most lovable?"

"Of course."

"It's the musical man who would most of all love such human beings, while if there were one who lacked harmony, he wouldn't love him."

"No, he wouldn't," he said, "at least if there were some defect in the soul. If, however, there were some bodily defect, he'd be patient and would willingly take delight in him."

[64] Note, there are no question marks in this aphorism.

[65] The German word is *superfötation* which has the same biological meaning as 'superfetation:' "1. *Phys*. A second conception occurring after (esp. some time after) a prior one and before delivery; the formation of a second fetus in a uterus already pregnant: occurring normally in some animals, and believed by some to occur exceptionally in women. b. *Bot*. In early use, applied to processes supposed to be analogous to superfetation in animals, e.g., the growth of a parasite, or an excessive production of ears of corn; in mod. Use, the fertilization of the same ovule by two different kinds of pollen." From *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (accessed May 29, 2005).

[66] Cf. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre*, trans. Allan Bloom, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), 22. "I know of only three instruments with which the morals [manners] of a people can be acted upon: the force of the laws, the empire of opinion, and the appeal of pleasure."

[67] The reader should take particular note of this part of the aphorism in the context of both the physiological agreement of the sages and Socrates' idiosyncrasy, as it may help us to later understand both. We will also find that the descriptions of how common tastes change, and of individuals who change common taste, foreshadow Nietzsche's later discussion of Socrates, particularly that in aphorisms 8 through 10. Note also the fundamental importance of *courage* in this process.

[68] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Chapter XVIII.

[69] Bacon, *New Organon*, I. 49. "For what a man had rather were true he more readily believes."

[70] Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 401e-a.

"So, Glaucon," I said, "isn't this why the rearing in music is most sovereign? Because rhythm and harmony most of all insinuate themselves into the inmost part of the soul and most vigorously lay hold of it in bringing grace with them; and they make a man graceful if he is correctly reared, if not, the opposite. Furthermore, it is sovereign because the man properly reared on rhythm and harmony would have the sharpest sense for what's been left out and what isn't a fine product of craft or what isn't a fine product of nature. And, due to his having the right kind of dislikes, he would praise the fine things; and, taking pleasure in them and receiving them into his soul, he would be reared on them and become a gentleman. He would blame and hate the ugly in the right way while he's still young, before he's able to grasp reasonable

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speech. And when reasonable speech comes, the man who's reared in this way would take most delight in it, recognizing it on account of its being akin?"

[71] Cf. Rousseau, *Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre*, 125. "Above all, let no one think that such an establishment can be made in the form of a trial to be abolished when harmful consequences are perceived; for those consequences are not done away with along with the theatre which produces them; they remain when their cause is removed, and, as soon as they begin to be felt, they are irremediable. Our altered morals [manners]; our changed tastes, will not recover their health since they will be corrupted; even our pleasures, our innocent pleasures, will have lost their charm; the theater will have deprived us of our taste forever." One wonders whether similar things could not be said about the 'drama' of dialectical argument.

[72] Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 537e-539d (especially 539b-c). The pertinent section is as follows:

"Don't you notice," I said, "how great is the harm coming from the practice of dialectic these days?"

"What's that?" he said.

"Surely its students," I said, "are filled full with lawlessness."

"Very much so," he said.

"Do you suppose it's any wonder," I said, "that they are so affected, and don't you sympathize?"

"Why exactly should I?" he said.

"It is like the case of a changeling child," I said, "reared in much wealth, in a numerous and great family amidst many flatterers, who on reaching manhood becomes aware that he does not belong to these pretended parents and isn't able to find those who really gave him birth. Can you divine how he would be disposed toward the flatterers and toward those who made the change, in the time when he didn't know about the change, and then again when he did know it. Or do you want to listen while I do the divining?"

"That's what I want," he said.

"Well, then," I said, "I divine that in the time when he doesn't know the truth he would be more likely to honor his father and his mother and the others who seem to be his kin than those who flatter him. And he would be less likely to overlook any of their needs, less likely to do or say anything unlawful to them, and less likely to disobey them in the important things than the flatterers."

"That's to be expected," he said.

"And, when he has become aware of that which is, I divine that now he would relax his honor and zeal for these people and intensify them for the flatterers, be persuaded by them a great deal more than before, and begin to live according to their ways, and have unconcealed relations with them. For that father and the rest of the adoptive kin, unless he is by nature particularly equitable, he wouldn't care."

"Everything you say," he said, "is just the sort of thing that would happen. But how does this image apply to those who take up arguments?"

"Like this. Surely we have from childhood convictions about what's just and fair by which we are brought up as by parents, obeying them as rulers and honoring them."

"Yes, we do."

"And then there are other practices opposed to these, possessing pleasures that flatter our soul and draw it to them. They do not persuade men who are at all sensible; these men rather honor the ancestral things and obey them as rulers."

"That's so."

"Then what?" I said. "When a question is posed and comes to the man who is so disposed, 'What is the fair?' – and after answering what he heard from the lawgiver, the argument refutes him, and refuting him many times and in many ways, reduces him to the opinion that what the law says is no more fair than ugly, and similarly about the just and good and the things he held most in honor – after that, what do you suppose he'll do about honoring and obeying as rulers the things he heard from the lawgiver?"

"Necessarily," he said, "he'll neither honor nor obey them any longer in the same way."

"Then," I said, "when he doesn't believe, as he did before, that these things are honorable or akin to him, and doesn't find the true ones, is it to be expected that he will go to any other sort of life than the one that flatters him?"

"No, it isn't," he said.

"Then, I suppose, he will seem to have become an outlaw from having been a lawabiding man."

"Necessarily."

"Isn't it to be expected," I said, "that this is what will happen to those who take up the study of

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arguments in this way; and as I was just saying, don't they deserve much sympathy?"

"And pity, too," he said.

"Lest your thirty-year-olds be recipients of this pity, mustn't you take every kind of precaution when they turn to arguments?"

"Quite so," he said.

"Isn't it one great precaution not to let them taste of arguments while they are young? I suppose you aren't unaware that when lads get their first taste of them, they misuse them as though it were play, always using them to contradict; and imitating those men by whom they are refuted, they themselves refute others, like puppies enjoying pulling and tearing with argument at those who happen to be near."

"They certainly have," he said, "a preternatural tendency in that direction."

"Then when they themselves refute many men and are refuted by many, they fall quickly into a profound disbelief of what they formerly believed. And as a result of this, you see, they themselves and the whole activity of philosophy become the objects of slander among the rest of men."

"Very true," he said.

"An older man, however," I said, "wouldn't be willing to participate in such madness. He will imitate the man who's willing to discuss and consider the truth rather than the one who plays and contradicts for the sake of the game. And he himself will be more sensible and will make the practice of discussion more honorable instead of more dishonorable."

"That's right," he said.

[73] Plato, *Republic*, 487b-d. The speech continues as follows:

"'In saying this, I look to the present case. Now someone might say that in speech he can't contradict you at each particular thing asked, but in deed he sees that of all those who start out on philosophy – not those who take it up for the sake of getting educated when they are young and then drop it, but those who linger in it for a longer time – most become quite queer, not to say completely vicious; while the ones who seem perfectly equitable, do nevertheless suffer at least one consequence of the practice you are praising – they become useless to the cities."

[74] This could be a subtle reference to Plato, *Republic*, 523c-d.

"The ones that don't summon the intellect," I said, "are all those that don't at the same time go over to the opposite sensation. But the ones that do go over I class among those that summon the intellect, when the sensation doesn't reveal one thing any more than its opposite, regardless of whether the object strikes the senses from near or far off. But you will see my meaning more clearly this way: these, we say, would be three fingers – the smallest, the second, and the middle."

"Certainly," he said.

"Think of them while I'm speaking as if they were being seen up close. Now consider this about them for me."

"What?"

"Surely each of them looks equally like a finger, and in this respect it makes no difference whether it's seen in the middle or on the extremes, whether it's white or black, or whether it's thick or thin, or anything else of the sort. In all these things the soul of the many is not compelled to ask the intellect what a finger is. For the sight at no point indicates to the soul that the finger is at the same time the opposite of a finger."

"No," he said, "it doesn't."

[75] Cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter XV. "The question who is the better man has no place in the condition of mere nature, where (as has been shown before) all men are equal. The inequality that now is has been introduced by the laws civil. I know that Aristotle in the first book of his Politics, for a foundation of his doctrine, maketh men by nature, some more worthy to command, meaning the wiser sort, such as he thought himself to be for his philosophy; others to serve, meaning those that had strong bodies, but were not philosophers as he; as master and servant were not introduced by consent of men, but by difference of wit: which is not only against reason, but also against experience. For there are very few so foolish that had not rather govern themselves than be governed by others: nor when the wise, in their own conceit, contend by force with them who distrust their own wisdom, do they always, or often, or almost at any time, get the victory. If nature therefore have made men equal, that equality is to be acknowledged: or if nature have made men unequal, yet because men that think themselves equal will not enter into conditions of peace, but

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upon equal terms, such equality must be admitted. And therefore for the ninth law of nature, I put this: that every man acknowledge another for his equal by nature. The breach of this precept is pride."

[76] Cf. Leo Strauss, *The City and Man*, 51. "Very much, not to say everything, seems to depend on what Socratic irony is. Irony is a kind of dissimulation, or of untruthfulness. Aristotle therefore treats the habit of irony as a vice. Yet, irony is the dissembling, not of evil actions or of vices, but rather of good actions or of virtues; the ironic man, in opposition to the boaster, understates his worth. If irony is a vice, it is a graceful vice. Properly used, it is not a vice at all: the magnanimous man – the man who regards himself as worthy of great things while in fact being worthy of them – is truthful and frank because he is in the habit of looking down and yet he is ironical in his intercourse with the many. Irony is then the noble dissimulation of one's worth, of one's superiority. We may say, it is the humanity peculiar to the superior man: he spares the feelings of his inferiors by not displaying his superiority. The highest form of superiority is the superiority in wisdom. Irony in the highest sense will then be the dissimulation of one's wisdom, *i.e.*, the dissimulation of one's wise thoughts."

[77] Plato, *Republic*, 516e-a.

[78] Cf. Plato, 'Euthyphro,' trans. Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West, in *Four Texts on Socrates*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 3c-e.

"SOCRATES. My dear Euthyphro, being laughed at is perhaps no matter. For in fact the Athenians, as it seems to me, do not much care about someone whom they suppose to be clever, unless he is a skillful teacher of his own wisdom. But their spiritedness is aroused against anyone who they suppose makes others like himself, either from envy, as you say, or because of something else.

EUTHYPHRO. That's why I do not at all desire to try out how they are disposed toward me in this regard.

SOCRATES. Perhaps *you* seem to make yourself available only infrequently and not to be willing to teach your own wisdom. But I fear that *I*, because of my philanthropy, seem to them to say profusely whatever I possess to every man, not only without pay, but even paying with pleasure if anyone is willing to listen to me. So if, as I was saying just now, they were going to laugh at me, as you say they do to you, it would not be unpleasant to pass the time in the law court joking and laughing. But if they are going to be serious, then how this will turn out now is unclear except to you diviners."

[79] It is these sub-rational parts of the human psyche that rhetoric appeals to, and it is because rhetoric makes this appeal that its persuasive power is so much stronger with most people.

[80] Note, *apologia*, from the title, means 'defense speech.'

[81] Plato, 'Apology of Socrates,' trans. Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West, in *Four Texts on Socrates*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 38d-e. (Cited hereafter as *Apology of Socrates*.) Note, Socrates seems to emphasize his choice *not* to appeal to the baser nature of his jurors by means of wailing and lamenting and flattering and praising (in short, by means of rhetoric), but instead, to appeal to their higher nature by means of dialectic – he emphasizes that by appealing to their reason, and thus treating them as men, and not as animals, he did what was suitable to a free man.

[82] Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 39a.

[83] Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 37e.

[84] *The History of Reynard the Fox*. See William Caxton's English Translation of 1481, originally published in 1889 as part of *Early Prose Romances* The Carisbrooke Library, Volume IV ed. Henry Morley, LL.D. (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1889), 9. The digital edition of the text can be found at: http://bestiary.ca/etexts/morley1889/morley1889.htm. Reynard the Fox's contravention of the "King's peace" is the largest part of the story of *The History of Reynard the Fox*.

[85] Leo Strauss, *The City and Man*, 51, emphasis supplied.

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[86] Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 337e, emphasis added.
"I certainly believe it," he [Thrasymachus] said, "so that Socrates can get away with his usual trick; he'll not answer himself, and when someone else has answered he gets hold of the argument and *refutes* it." "You best of men," I said, "how could a man answer who, in the first place, does not know and does not profess to know; and who, in the second place, even if he does have some supposition about these things, is forbidden to say what he believes by no ordinary man?"

[87] Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 337a.
"He [Thrasymachus] listened, burst out laughing very scornfully, and said, "Heracles! Here is that habitual irony of Socrates. I knew it, and I predicted to these fellows that you wouldn't be willing to answer, that you would be ironic and do anything rather than answer if someone asked you something."

[88] Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 21b-d. Cf. 21e, 22c, 23a, 23cd, 24a, 28a, 34cd and 37d.

[89] Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 23c.

[90] Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 33bc.

[91] Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 40e-41c.

[92] Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Preface,' end. It is pertinent to remember that Nietzsche seeks to identify and destroy *only* decaying idols, that he will show mercy to those which are still life-enhancing and continue to help maintain cheerfulness.

[93] Plato, *Second Letter*, 314c.

[94] Richard Polt in note 104 to his translation of *Twilight of the Idols* suggests we "see Plato, *Phaedrus* 251a-252e, and *Symposium* 208e-209c."

[95] Cf. Rousseau, *Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre*, 31. "Fanaticism is not an error, but a blind and stupid fury that reason can never confine. The only secret for preventing it from coming to birth is to restrain those who excite it. You can very well demonstrate to madmen that their chiefs are fooling them; they are no less fervent in following them. Once fanaticism exists, I see only one way left to stop its progress; that is to use its own arms against it. It has nothing to do with reasoning and convincing. One must leave philosophy behind, close the books, take the sword, and punish the imposters."

[96] Richard Polt, in note 23 to his translation of *Twilight of the Idols* says: "For Socrates' claim to be an expert in things erotic, see Plato, *Lysis* 204c, *Symposium* 177d and 212b, and *Phaedrus* 257a." Cf. also *Theages*, 128b. Note, the eroticism of Socrates is the central of the three features of his character which are fascinating to the noble Athenians – dialectics and his physical ugliness (as per aphorism #9) are the other two.

[97] The reader should recall what Nietzsche earlier said in the 'Preface,' – that "every case [is a] case of luck."

[98] This political discussion of the soul calls Plato's *Republic* to mind. Cf. *Republic*, 435b-442d.

[99] This is an explicit reference to *Republic's* allegory of the cave, which is an allegory not only for the city, but for the man as well. Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 514a-517c.

[100] Cf. Cicero, *De Fato*, v.11. "But it is possible that these defects may be due to natural causes; but their eradication and entire removal, recalling the man himself from the serious vices to which he was inclined, does not rest with natural causes, but with will, effort, training." And *Tusculan Disputations*, IV.xxxvii.80. "Moreover men who are described as naturally irascible or compassionate or envious or

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anything of the kind, have an unhealthy constitution of soul, yet all the same are curable, as is said to have been Socrates' case."

[101] We presume the instincts of the noble Athenians were in harmony, that the noble Athenians were in control of themselves as a result of their breeding, the noble man just 'instinctively' acts rightly. Cf. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man,' 47.

[102] Cf. Nietzsche, *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers*, 'Socrates,' 149. "His means are, first of all, irony in the roles of learner and questioner, a gradually [and] masterfully refined art form. [There is] then the indirect way, fraught with detours, with dramatic effects, then an extremely likeable voice, and finally the eccentricity of his Silenusian physiognomy."

[103] If so, we then have a possible explanation why Nietzsche only partially reveals the character of the Greek situation here in 'The Problem of Socrates' (detailing the remainder in later sections, especially 'Skirmishes of an Untimely Man' and 'What I Owe to the Ancients') – this 'problem' is only of secondary importance to 'the problem of Socrates,' insofar as the Greeks formally shared Socrates' problem of anarchy in the instincts.

[104] Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 514a-517c.

[105] Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 519c-520c.

[106] Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 340d-e.

[107] "Procrustes was a host who adjusted his guests to their bed. Procrustes, whose name means 'he who stretches', was arguably the most interesting of Theseus's challenges on the way to becoming a hero. He kept a house by the side of the road where he offered hospitality to passing strangers, who were invited in for a pleasant meal and a night's rest in his very special bed. Procrustes described it as having the unique property that its length exactly matched whomsoever lay down upon it. What Procrustes didn't volunteer was the method by which this 'one-size-fits-all' was achieved, namely as soon as the guest lay down Procrustes went to work upon him, stretching him on the rack if he was too short for the bed and chopping off his legs if he was too long. Theseus turned the tables on Procrustes, fatally adjusting him to fit his own bed." From: http://www.mythweb.com/teachers/why/basics/procrustes.html (accessed on April 25, 2005).

[108] Note, this is the only occurrence of 'improvement' or any of its derivatives that occurs without quotation marks around it.

[109] As it can in the philosopher, *if* 'to reason' is instinctive.

[110] Plato, *Republic*, 521a.

[111] Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 535c-536c.

[112] Nietzsche's placement of 'health' and 'virtue' in quotes is justified by their being related to the particular nature of individuals. Cf. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 120.

[113] These centers refer to Nietzsche's formatting in the first edition.

[114] Cf. Leo Strauss, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 138. "A man (or rather his soul) or a city is just if each of its parts does its work well and thus the whole is healthy; a soul or city is just if it is healthy or in good order (cf. Plato, *Republic* 444d-e)."

[115] Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 31c-d.

[116] Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 41c.

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[117] Cf. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 13. "But that he was sentenced to death, not exile, Socrates himself seems to have brought about with perfect awareness and without any natural awe of death."

[118] Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 36a-38b.

[119] See analysis of the sixth aphorism above.

[120] Plato, *Republic*, 523b-c. The whole discussion spans 523a-524d.

[121] Cf. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, ed. T. W. Craik, (London: Thomson, 2002), I.i.60-62. "The strawberry grows beneath the nettle, / And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best / Neighboured by fruit of baser quality." It could be that the philosopher instinctively recognizes the decay, the décadence, the depravity, the debased nature of the society in which he resides and that it is this instinctive recognition that that which surrounds him is Bad, that sets him upon the path to find that which is Good.

[122] Plato, *Phaedo*, 60a.

[123] Plato, *Phaedo*, 63d.

[124] Plato, *Phaedo*, 63d-e.

[125] Cf. Plato, *Phaedo*, 59d-e and 116e.

[126] Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage and Eric Salem, 'Introduction,' 22-23, in *Phaedo*.

[127] Cf. Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 28b-29a, 34b-35d, 38d-e.

[128] Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 38c.

[129] In fact, we should note, Nietzsche has intimated that it is possible that the solution which the Greeks adopted, the 'cure' of Socrates, might have been adopted regardless – "there was but one choice: either to perish or – to be *absurdly rational* ..."

[130] This refusal is the result of the failure to identify the instinctual basis of Socrates' adoption of 'rationality at any price,' which in turn results in the mistaking of Socrates' 'virtue' for Virtue simply, the 'health' of his soul for the Health of the soul proper, his happiness for the Happiness of man.

[131] Plato, *Second Letter*, 314c.

[132] Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 490e-491a:

"'Then we must,' I said, 'look at the corruptions of this nature and see how it is destroyed in many, while a small number escape – just those whom they call not vicious but useless. And after that, in turn, we must look at the natures of the souls that imitate the philosophic nature and set themselves up in its practice, and see what sort they are who approach a practice that is of no value for them and beyond them, and who often strike false notes, thereby attaching to philosophy every where and among all men a reputation such as you say.'"

Also Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 500b:

'Don't you also share my supposition that the blame for the many's being harshly disposed toward philosophy is on those men from outside who don't belong and have burst in like drunken revelers, abusing one another and indulging a taste for quarreling, and who always make their arguments about persons, doing what is least seemly in philosophy?'

[133] Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 495b-496a:

'Then, you surprising man,' I said, 'such is the extent and character of this destruction and corruption of the best nature with respect to the best pursuit. And such a nature is a rare occurrence in any event, we say. And particularly from these men come those who do the greatest harm to cities and private men, as well as those who do the good, if they chance to be drawn in this direction. No little nature ever does anything great either to private man or city.'

'Very true,' he said.

'So these men, for whom philosophy is most suitable, go thus into exile and leave her abandoned and unconsummated. They themselves live a life that isn't suitable or true; while, after them, other unworthy men come to her – like an orphan bereft of relatives – and disgrace her. These are the ones who attach to her reproaches such as even you say are alleged by the men who reproach her – namely, that of those who have intercourse with her, some are worthless and the many worthy of many bad things.'

'Yes,' he said, 'that is what is said.'

'And what is said is fitting,' I said. 'For other manikins see that this place has become empty although full of fine names and pretensions; and, just like those who run away from prisons to temples, these men too are overjoyed to leap out of the arts into philosophy, those who happen to be subtlest in their little art. For, although philosophy is faring thus, it still retains a more magnificent station in comparison with the other arts at least. Aiming at this, many men with imperfect natures – just as their bodies are mutilated by the arts and crafts, so too their souls are doubled up and spoiled as a result of being in mechanical occupations – or isn't that necessary?'

'Quite so,' he said.

'Do you suppose,' I said, 'that they are any different to see than a little, bald-headed worker in bronze who has gotten some silver, and, newly released from bonds, just washed in a bathhouse, wearing a new-made cloak and got up like a bridegroom, is about to marry his master's daughter because he's poor and destitute?'

'Hardly at all different,' he said.

'What sort of things are such men likely to beget? Aren't they bastard and ordinary?'

'Quite necessarily.'

'And what about this? When men unworthy of education come near her and keep her company in an unworthy way, what sort of notions and opinions will we say they beget? Won't they be truly fit to be called sophisms, connected with nothing genuine or worthy of true prudence?'

'That's entirely certain,' he said.

[134] Cf. Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 36-36. "Writings are naturally accessible to all who can read. Therefore a philosopher who chose the second way could expound only such opinions as were suitable for the nonphilosophic majority: all of his writings would have to be, strictly speaking, exoteric. These opinions would not be in all respects consonant with truth. Being a philosopher, that is, hating 'the lie in the soul' more than anything else, he would not deceive himself about the fact that such opinions are merely 'likely tales,' or 'noble lies,' or 'probable opinions,' and would leave it to his philosophic readers to disentangle the truth from its poetic or dialectic presentation. But he would defeat his purpose if he indicated clearly which of his statements expressed a noble lie, and which the still more noble truth. For philosophic readers he would do almost more than enough by drawing their attention to the fact he did not object to telling lies which were noble, or tales which were merely similar to truth. … All books of that kind owe their existence to the love of the mature philosopher for the puppies of the race, by whom he wants to be loved in turn: all exoteric books are 'written speeches caused by love.'"

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